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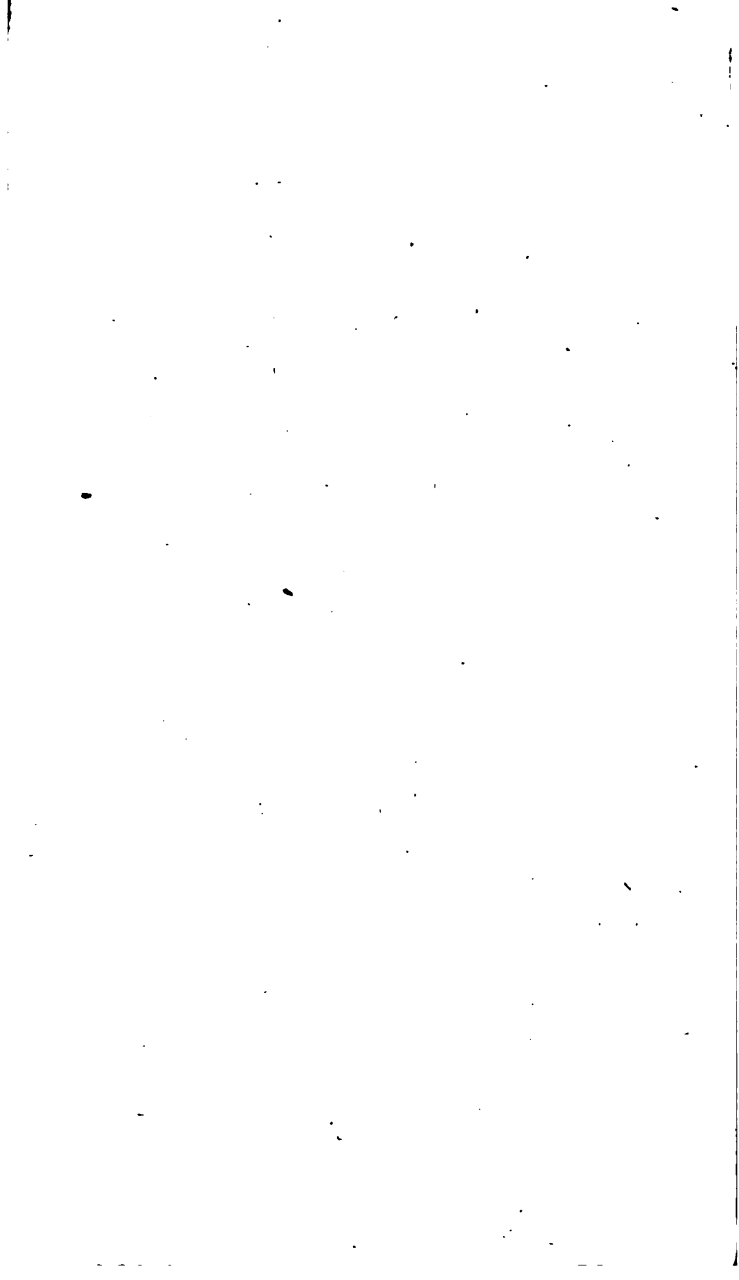
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W. H. Walcott.







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A N N A.

CHAPTER XLVII.

A new Acquaintance.

MR. Wellers brought Mr. Bently home to dinner with him.—When he laid aside his religious fits (and that was as often as he had cheerful company) he was a good-hearted old man, and too much wrapped up in his wife not to respect her guest: Bently, Anna had never seen, though both gentlemen had heard sufficiently that so bad a woman had been at Layton. The cheerful meal passed with that mutual satisfaction, which peace in the breast, and plenty on the board, may be supposed to inspire.

As soon as dinner was over, Anna rose to be gone; when Mr. Bently, taking hold of her struggling hand, advised her not to attempt walking by herself. Alarmed, she begged to know what she had to fear? "Fear, sweet maid!" answered he; "why, "your dangers are so manifold, I can hardly "repeat them all: in the first place, here "is old Roger Bently, a hale widower "of seventy-three, finds himself strangely "tempted to run away with you; then "you are convicted, on the evidence of the "envy of the women, and the admiration "of the men, of the high crime of beauty, "and the monstrous phenomena of humility and modesty: the first they cannot "take from you; but the two last they "will contrive so to disfigure, you will "not yourself know them to be your own: "and lastly," continued he, lowering his voice, "there is a certain handsome libertine, of horse-whipping memory, whose "violence, more pleasing, is consequently "more dangerous than all."

Anna had no idea this was the person on
whom

whom Edwin had wrecked his disappointment and ill humour: her surprise at his odd accostment was not so great as at that discovery. Mrs. Wellers, laughing, said, Then, if the fair damsel were in such danger, it would be quite in his way to stand forth the champion of innocence. "Is she really "innocent?" demanded Bently, with a significant earnestness.

"You see the company she is in," said Mrs. Wellers.

Bently felt the reproof, and getting up, striking his oaken towel (without which he never now ventured out) hard on the ground, told her he would be her champion and her friend, as long, and no longer than she deserved it. This rough kindness alarmed Anna so much, that she was not capable of making him any answer; nor did she find herself much easier by his resolution of walking home with her. Mrs. Wellers, who knew the goodness of Mr. Bently's heart (which, under the appearance of misanthropy and obstinate positiveness, veiled a sensibility which was often

painful to himself, and a generosity that was felt by every individual he could assist, without being hurt by their grateful acknowledgements,) was rejoiced at the favourable impression she saw he had received of our heroine; and, willing to increase a partiality so visible; said they could all walk home with her. "But come, Miss Mansel," said she, "you shall give Mr. Bently a song." Our heroine was too sensible of her friend's kind intentions towards her, to hesitate at complying with her request; though very much against her inclinations, in the present instance: she sung, therefore, Linley's

"Alas! from the day my poor heart."

Bently's eyes bore witness to the pathos of the words; and the melody of the voice transported him out of himself.——"Do take notice, Madam Wellers," said he, half sobbing, "I will have no more of this girl's songs; I did not promise to make a fool of myself: but I suppose you understand music; do you play, Miss?" —
"When

“When she can get an instrument,” said Mrs. Wellers.—A nod from Bently was all his answer.

They set out for the village in high good-humour, (Bently insisting on Anna’s leaning on his arm) and were as cordially received by Dalton and his family, whose assiduities and respect to our heroine were equally new and unaccountable.—Mrs. Dalton blamed her for walking in the heat, and for alarming them by her long absence—She was Peggy’s dear Miss Mansel; and their obligations to Mrs. Wellers, for her kindness, were endless.

Bently, whose religion consisted in the mere private practice of a particular kind of love to his fellow-creatures, without ever entering the door of a church or meeting, except Easter, Whitsun, and Christmas days, held Dalton and all his sect (his friend Wellers only excepted) in contempt and dislike; while that good man looked on Bently with abhorrence, as a reviler of religion, a prophaner of the sabbath (as he actually more than once had suffered some

young people he had invited to his house to strike up a dance in his hall after tea, on a Sunday evening) and an outcast of heaven.

Few civilities were likely to take place between two people so opposite in their inclinations to each other : Mr. Bently hardly sat down ; he staid only to bid Anna be sure to seek a friend at the Abbey—Mrs. Wellers was as little disposed to prolong her stay ; they were therefore soon at liberty to open to their ward the splendid fortune that awaited her acceptance.

C H A P. XLVIII.

The Rejection.

AS Anna knew nothing of the friendly alliance entered into, between the right honourable Lord Patrick Sutton, and the reverend John Dalton, her surprise was not more excited by the matter, which gave them

them such evident pleasure, than at the manner of such a proposal's being made; but while her whole heart rejected, with antipathy and contempt, the most distant idea of such an union, she had her doubts of its being seriously intended by Lord Sutton. Perfect master of dissimulation she knew him to be: once her bitter enemy, and ever the object of her dislike, which she was at no pains to conceal, was it likely he could mean to unite himself to her? — Some mystery, she could not help thinking, lay under this astonishing appearance, and, as coming from him, could mean her no good.

Mrs. Dalton was amazed such great fortune had not the power of transporting her: she assured her over and over it was true, that she would certainly be a great lady; hoped she would get Mr. Dalton a living, take Peggy to wait on her, and get Billy a place, Jacky into the excise, and Polly, Sally, and Jenny, into something or other. Those assurances, and those expectations, were echoed by all present. She inter-

rupted not the volubility that appeared to have taken possession of the family; but reserved her sentiments for the event, as she was bid to expect the avowal of that great and good man's affection the next day: the evening passed in the utmost harmony; a bottle of Mrs. Dalton's best-currant wine added to their hilarity, and they retired to dream of livings and fat capons.

Before the family were assembled to breakfast next morning, a servant arrived with the following letter:

To Miss M A N S E L.

"MADAM,

"Were not those sentiments of tenderness I feel for you founded on an unsurmountable regard and long-cherished attachment, more ceremony might be requisite on their avowal. I have told Mr. Dalton my intentions of settling on you a handsome allowance, and making you Lady Sutton. You are too prudent not to be sensible I must forego many advantages
in

in this disposal of my name and fortune; but my reliance is on that, and the gratitude for your disposition, which, together with my great love for your person, out-balances every argument of interest and ambition.

“ I wish the matter concluded immediately; Mr. Dalton may inspect the writing, and I will follow this note, if (which I think cannot be doubted) your answer be propitious; till when,

I am, my lovely girl,

Your devoted

SUTTON.”

While Anna was perusing this proud offer, the Daltons were impatient to see, to congratulate her and themselves, to speak confirmation of their own hopes, and to assist in raising hers. They were seized with wonder at her stay above stairs; the servant was very courteously desired to walk in and sit down, and divers questions asked about his good Lord. At length Mrs. Dalton's impatience carried her up stairs: she found

our heroine in the act of sealing a letter, which, with great composure, she directed to Lord Sutton, and then accompanied her down. The person who brought the letter was the great man's great man, viz. his servant out of livery, and the same on whose sagacity his Lordship depended so much, at the time he was so good as to send our young heroine into the world for experience. He was vaunting his own importance to the gaping Dalton and his simpering daughter, when Mrs. Dalton entered, followed by Anna; the good creature not forming an idea a Lord could be rejected, still running on in her castle-building provision for her family, blessing the accident that threw the lucky orphan in their way.

The servant, who had not the least recollection of her person, stood up, at their entrance, with the utmost respect, and received her letter for his master, with a fervility in his manner that shewed his penetration. A treaty with so beautiful a creature, bore omens of the good fortune of the
nego-

negociation which this trusty domestic knew how to make use of. As soon as he was gone from the door, every mouth was open with inquiries of the contents of the letter, and her answer, which last Mr. Dalton hinted he might have been consulted on. She produced the letter: he read it twice over, making remarks as he went on, expatiating on the generosity, the goodness of heart, the frankness of disposition, and above all, the humility of the writer, whose praises were echoed by his wife and daughter. "Well, my dear girl," said Mrs. Dalton, "now your answer; I long to see that: I am sure it is clever, you have such a knack at your pen." She presented a paper with the rough copy; but it is not in the power of pen to paint the instant change of countenance, the surprise and dejection of one part, the rage and malice of the other, when Dalton read the following:

"MY LORD,

"I am equally ignorant of the sentiments
of

of tenderness, or the regard on which they are founded, that gives your Lordship a right to wave any ceremony consistent with your dignity, or due to me. The contents of your letter, my Lord, whether serious or ironical, it is not in my power to determine; but I frankly own, nothing coming from a man who, unprovokedly, could so essentially injure an innocent orphan, can be either agreeable or eligible, in the common occurrences of life, much less when the sacred union of marriage is proposed.

“ My Lord, I really have the prudence to set too great a value on my own peace and happiness, to sacrifice either to your imaginary generosity; nor will (I trust) the gratitude of my disposition be called for in the acknowledgement of any farther favour conferred by your Lordship on,

My Lord, &c. &c.

A. MANSEL.”

The paper fell from his hand as he concluded it, and his wife's face exhibited a variety of colours; spite and fury darted
their

their rays from the eyes of Peggy; but speech was denied to them all.

Anna naturally concluded, their own views might lead them to wish to see a person on whom, she confessed, they had many claims, in a situation to repay them every obligation; but she had no suspicion they would look on her as a passive machine, to work their own advantage with; little less could she expect the scene that followed: "Wretch!" cried Dalton, at last, "and have you, then, dared to send
 " this scrawl to that worthy nobleman? Who,
 " ungrateful fool! dost thou think, is bound
 " to support thy upstart pride; or how wilt
 " thou pay what the law will enforce for
 " thy maintenance and bringing up, which
 " I now demand, and will instantly employ
 " an officer to arrest thee for? You shall go,
 " Madam, to jail, and see if there, in want
 " of food, raiment, and every necessary
 " of life, you will find another Dalton!"
 With these words he went hastily out of the room, leaving Anna a statue of surprise and terror. It was now her turn to be
 dumb,

dumb ; tears were likewise denied her : she already saw herself in the rude hands of bailiffs, and anticipated the terror of the prison she was threatened with. Mrs. Dalton, though she had no idea her husband could really intend a measure her conscience told her was at once barbarous and unjust, was, in reality, so much displeased and hurt herself, that she the readier adopted the conduct he had assumed, though, at the same time, she was sure it was merely meant to intimidate her. Peggy, the unfeeling Peggy, forsook the cause of her youth and sex, to vent the most cruel reproaches for Anna's ungrateful return to her father's charity, and reviled her, in the bitterest terms, for her pride and poverty ; adding every insult envy and ill-nature could invent to her invectives. It is not probable an early period would have been put to her eloquence, had it not been interrupted by the sudden fall off the chair, where she sat, of the unhappy object to whom it was addressed.

Pale and motionless, when they beheld her at their feet, fright and terror took the place

place of anger; and dear self being still the object in view, operated now as strongly in their endeavours to recover, as it had before done in reducing her to the situation she was then in: they got her laid on a bed, unlaced, and almost washed her with hartshorn in vain. From the instant Dalton left the room, her senses forsook her; nor had she been sensible of a single reproach from either mother or daughter. To their mutual consternation and dismay, they found every effort to restore her to life ineffectual: they sent to every probable place after Dalton; he was not to be found. They then began to have the most alarming fears for her life, and at length sent for Dr. Collet: his skill and attention, in half an hour, brought her to the appearance of sense; but her perfect recovery was preceded by a violent burst of hysterics. Collet found himself exceedingly interested for his patient: so lovely a woman he had never before seen; and the situation in which he found her left not a doubt with him but the disorder was on her mind; and notwithstanding

standing all he had heard concerning her, she had so much the peculiar happiness of bearing in her open countenance the traits of innocence and ingenuity, that Collet became an instant convert to her looks: he asked, with the voice of kindness, how she found herself, and whether there were any thing in his power, as doctor, or friend, that would soothe or relieve the evident distress of her mind. She thanked him fervently for the humane offer, but said, at present, she had not sufficiently the power of recollection to avail herself of his friendship, nor did she choose wholly to decline it: she earnestly begged, then, to be left to herself; which was complied with, on the part of Mrs. Dalton, with some difficulty.

C H A P.

C H A P. XLIX.

The Elopement.

IT was by this time three o'clock, and no Dalton returned; her dread of his re-appearance was unspeakable: at first it occurred to her she might go to Mrs. Wellers'; but, as that step could not fail to enrage Dalton, what could she hope from it, but to be torn from her protection, or to be a tax on the generosity of people who were little more than strangers to her, to pay his demand? If the idea of Mr. Bently's particular charge presented itself, it was accompanied by the same conclusion; and her return to Mr. Mansel was, for that reason, rendered impracticable; but to continue under the roof of a man who could suffer such a thought to enter his heart against her, was to put herself entirely in his power. As to Lord Sutton, it was unfortunate for that passionate lover,
that

that he never obtruded on the thoughts of his fair mistress, unattended by some very untoward circumstance by way of concomitant to the antipathy she felt for him.

When, little more than an infant, she was discarded by Mrs. Melmoth, *he* was the person to whose baneful influence she attributed that misfortune ; when she lost the favour of Lady Edwin, *he* was the suspected, though secret enemy ; and now, when her heart was breaking with grief and apprehension, her misery originated with *him* : and could any circumstance on earth induce her to hesitate one moment, whether to reject, at all risks, or unite herself, for life, to a being she held with so much reason in abhorrence ? His she determined never to be ; and no way offering to her imagination to avoid him but flight, it no sooner struck her as her only resource, than she instantly resolved to put it into execution : but here again a thousand difficulties occurred ; she was wholly without acquaintance, destitute of friends,

friends, and had very little money: not a creature in the created space of nature could she apply to for protection or assistance; nevertheless, the alternative was too horrible to suffer her to deliberate; her part was to resolve.

The stage, she recollected, passed towards London at five o'clock; could she but reach it, she would have hope. Mrs. Wellers was in London, on the inquiries after her character in Grosvenor-square; to her she might easily write, and by that means put it out of the cruel Dalton's power to be troublesome to her friends. The idea that again brought Dalton and his threats to her mind, was so terrible, all fear of danger, all dread of throwing herself among strangers, vanished: of the wickedness and villany every where to be met with in the metropolis she had heard; but it must be bad, indeed, if in any part worse men than Sutton, or more barbarous than Dalton, were to be found: the least delay might put it out of her power to escape; he might now be coming to put
his

his threats in execution; that very night might be spent in a prison, from whence she could not be liberated, but at the expence of every thing dear to her : no time was therefore left for consideration.

Her bed-room luckily contained all her trunks, and what else of value she could call her own; she hastily packed up a couple of gowns, some linen, and a few valuables, the late property of the deceased Mrs. Mansel; that done, the doctor's friendly offer recurred to her memory; she begged the maid to call him without disturbing her mistress, who was at dinner; the girl, who very much respected her, obeyed, and Collet was introduced alone to his fair patient.

Her terror and agitation increasing as the day advanced, her natural timidity gave way to the urgency of her affairs: she therefore instantly asked him if he were in earnest in his offers to serve her? Upon his word he was.

“ Well, then, Sir,” said she, “ it is of
“ the last importance to me to be able to
“ quit

“ quit this place directly : I have not a
“ moment to lose, nor a friend in the
“ world; I am in debt to Mr. Dalton
“ more than is in my power to pay; but
“ I leave things of value behind me: those
“ trunks are all full of good clothes,
“ given me (bursting into tears) by a dear
“ friend who loved me : I have no wish
“ but to pay as far as all I have will go ;
“ will you, Sir, be so good as to put your
“ seal on them for that purpose ?” “ I
“ will do any thing you wish me,” said
the good-natured Collet, greatly moved.—
“ God reward you, Sir,” answered she :
“ one favour more I have to ask, which,
“ is, your advice how I shall convey this
“ bundle to the stage, unseen by the fa-
“ mily.”—“ I will send my boy,” returned
Collet : “ throw it out of the back win-
“ dow; he shall receive and carry it round
“ the corner, whither you had best follow
“ the moment you get out.”

Mrs. Dalton now coming up, the doctor took himself off, first giving a significant glance at the window. When he was gone,

Mrs.

Mrs. Dalton began to wonder what was become of her husband, where he could be gone, and on what errand; for whatever he might say in his passion, she was sure, except very much provoked indeed, he would never take the step he had threatened Anna with: to be sure it was a very grievous thing to have a young person they had brought up as their own, and loved so well, turn out so obstinate, self-willed, and blind to her own interest, as well as theirs; and after always behaving so well to her, to have her refuse an offer that would be the making of them all: but she hoped, on seriously considering the importance and advantage of Lord Sutton's love, Anna, her dear Anna, would think better of it. The good woman, who really loved our heroine, blended her happiness so entirely with the interest of her own family, that she persuaded herself it was one and the same thing, and her intreaties were accompanied with tears. Anna had the gentlest of human hearts: every instance of maternal tenderness now returned to her memory;

memory: she recollected, with gratitude and affection, the exposed state of her infancy, and candidly owned to herself, the hopes entertained of the aggrandizement of her family through such unexpected means, were natural; and therefore, in consequence, the disappointment bitter: she was now, for the last time perhaps, with a person who had been to her a careful good woman; it was yet in her power to satisfy her own feelings, by amply rewarding the care taken of her helpless years; or it was yet in her choice to abandon what had been to her a parental roof, and, by exposing herself to a pitiless world, encounter evils of which she had but a faint idea—her coward heart shrunk from the trial. But what was the dreadful alternative? Lord Sutton, proud, designing and vindictive, were it probable he would forego a scheme, which, by his own note, it was proved, had cost him so dear; or would he not rather seek revenge for the indignity offered his pride? Interest she well knew to be the god of Dalton's idolatry: so rich,

so powerful a man, whose very name carried a talismanic influence with narrow minds, wanted not the means, and it was idle to think he would want inclination, to prevail on him to act as he directed: the cruelty of his disposition she knew, and dreaded being its victim; but to marry him, or indeed any other man but one in the world, she would die first; and again, the terrors she before felt at the thoughts of Dalton's return, seized her, which, on her being forbid walking in the air, increased to such a degree, it was with great difficulty she was kept from fainting: she then begged to be left to rest, as she was too weak, and too much exhausted, for conversation. Mrs. Dalton, with her natural good-humour, desired her to think on what she had said, and put it in her power to inform Mr. Dalton, when he came home, of her resolution to apologize to Lord Sutton for the rude and improper letter she sent him. Anna's eyes filled with tears as Mrs. Dalton affectionately embraced her at parting: again her resolution wavered—
when

when, casting her eye towards the window, she saw Collet's lad: that instant, therefore, was the crisis of her fate; no time must be lost in deliberation; she threw out the bundle, and recommending herself and her cause to the protection of heaven, stole down unperceived, through a back door, into a lane, from whence a foot-path crossed a field, out of the sight of the house, and led to the high road: at the stile she found the lad waiting with her things; and in half a minute the stage, which Collet had ordered to stop there, drew up: fortunately it had no other passenger; she hastily got into it, and drawing up the shutter, which was half wood and half glass, took breath.

C H A P. L.

The Storm.

IN the first hurry of Anna's spirits, she knew not whether to lament or rejoice at the success of her scheme: her unfriended

situation, and total ignorance of any part of London, but that least eligible for her to be seen in, or any one person to whom, in her present situation, she could properly apply, so shocked her imagination, that the coach no sooner moved off than her courage failed ; fear and apprehension tempted her to return. Suppose she went to Mrs. Wellers, only to try whether a man who had brought her up with his own children, could really be so cruel, so inhuman ; or whether his threats were not, as Mrs. Dalton said, the effects of passion, which would be forgotten when that was over : at worst she could but leave the Hill privately, if he persisted in his demands.

This new plan, aided by the recoiling of her imagination at the dreary prospect before her, had well nigh been adopted, when over the top of the shutter, as she was going to cast a wishful look on the place she had left, a hackney-coach passed, in which she plainly saw the hateful visage of Lord Sutton in earnest conference with
Dalton

Dalton—A sight so confirming to her worst fears, turned the scale: she threw herself on her knees, to thank Heaven for having inspired her with resolution to fly from the snare laid for her, and again endeavoured to think of some place, where she might be, for the present, secure from the evils she had escaped, as well as those to which she might be still liable. After turning in her mind every possible means of procuring a safe and creditable lodging, she was obliged to leave that essential point to chance.

It was about half past six when the stage got to Whitechapel: the first stand they came to, she desired the driver to call her a hackney-coach, and changed her vehicle, without having yet determined where to go. After being repeatedly asked by the coachman, where he was to drive? not being able to recollect any other place, she answered, "Westminster."—"Westminster!" repeated the man, "is a large place—you may as well order me to drive to London—What part must I go to?" This question, simple as it was, confused and

disturbed her: after some hesitation, she answered, "The Abbey." — The man mounted his box, and drove off. Every step they went filled her with unspeakable apprehensions they should soon reach their journey's end: where upon earth could she go to then, whose existence seemed of consequence to no creature living? Even the shelter of a hackney-coach had a degree of comfort attending it; yet of that she should soon be deprived. Every busy face she passed, however mean their appearance, were objects whose situations were, in comparison of hers, enviable. — They had a home; they had connections; they were not destitute of the endearing ties of blood: even the wretched wanderer, who knows not where to lay his head, could share his miseries with parents, children, or some kind relatives, who would feel for, if they could not relieve his distress. In the midst of those insupportable reflections, it began to thunder and lighten; the rain poured in torrents from the heavens; and the coachman, impatient himself to obtain shelter
from

from the weather, drove on at a furious rate—Anna was naturally terrified at thunder; it was a weakness she was particularly subject to; but, at this period, the terror of the storm, lost in the more shocking situation of her mind, was not attended to, till, turning the corner of a narrow street, which the coachman had chosen to cut the way as short as possible, one of the hind wheels flew off, and the coach was instantly overturned: providentially she received no hurt, but what was the effect of the fright; and that was much less than it would have been, had such an accident happened to her in less distressed circumstances.—People flocked to their doors, although the storm continued still too violent to suffer many to gratify their curiosity, by crouding round the broken vehicle. However, a decent, elderly woman, at whose little shop-window hung a few pair of gloves and stockings, together with some children's shoes and caps, opened her glass door, and invited our heroine in. She thankfully accepted her civility, and was conducted through a small

shop into a smaller parlour, where sat a young woman in mourning, who very good-naturedly offered her chair, and assisted the woman of the shop in her civilities. The tears of Anna, whose inward agitation was far greater than her apparent cause, were no longer to be restrained; she wept violently, and having given that seasonable vent to her emotions, grew more composed. The first thing that then struck her, was the bundle, which, in her confusion, she had forgotten to take out of the coach; but, entirely ignorant of the villany practised constantly in the metropolis, without feeling the least alarmed, she now directed her attention to the carriage.

A mob had by this time surrounded it: the coachman had taken off the horses, and was going, as he said, to ask his master's directions about the coach, when he was stopped to give an account of the lady's bundle: the man either had not seen it, or pretended he had not; for he directly returned, and searched every part in and about the coach, without success; it was not to be found.

When

When this unfortunate circumstance was told Anna, she actually gasped for breath; and for some moments her countenance, ever expressive of the feelings of her heart, betrayed the most poignant despair. A watch, two guineas, and a mourning ring, were her whole possession—Without a single change of any sort, a friend to speak to, or home to receive her, she found herself very much indisposed; had uncommon pains in her head and limbs; and the accumulating misfortunes that followed her, so affected her, she thought her woes were drawing to a period—Not able to stand, she sunk to the ground, exclaiming, God be merciful to me! What is to come next! The women in vain attempted to soothe and pacify her: the agitation of her mind, the adventures of the day, and the uncertainty of what might yet happen before the close of it, added to an uncommon heat and drought which increased every moment, induced her willingly to accept of the humane offer made her by Mrs. Hughes (the young woman I mentioned,) to lie down on the

C 5

bed,

bed, where she presently fell into so found a sleep, it was not easy to awake her.

The hospitable women gave themselves no other concern, as the night came on, about their guest, than what the idea of the sufferings of the friends of so amiable a creature on her staying out, suggested—I have said, Anna's countenance always made her friends: they were charmed with her looks and manner; nor could they refrain, as she lay asleep, admiring the beauty of her person—Above the middling class they were sure she was: her dress was perfectly genteel and good; though plain, it was indeed the very Circassian described by Miss Bibbins—A large black bonnet and cloak, a morning-cap, and hair quite undressed, half hid the elegance of her figure, when she entered the house; but when these were removed, she appeared, as she really was, a most perfect creature.

At midnight she awoke; but what was the consternation of the women, to find her totally insensible to every thing around her, and burning hot! They immediately sent
for

for a neighbouring apothecary, who pronounced her in a fever of the irruptive kind.

The distress of the women may be conceived, when in addition to the small hopes he gave of her recovery to sense, before the turn of her disorder, the search, which was made in his presence, into her pockets, left them in entire ignorance of her family, friends, and connections.—In this dreadful state, Providence threw our heroine on the benevolence of people whose goodness of heart and humane disposition was such, that power only was wanting to render them of the greatest benefit to society.

Mrs. Hughes was a young widow, whose concerns had brought her to London for a few weeks, and had accidentally taken that lodging : she declared, she would not only give up her bed to the poor stranger, but would defray the expence of her illness ; the woman of the house and her daughter agreed alternately to nurse her, and the apothecary engaged his constant attendance.—In this state of insensibility, happy to her, we must now leave our heroine, and return to our friends at Layton.

C H A P. LI.

A noble Mind in Distress.

WHEN Dalton went out in the morning, his first aim was to overtake the servant who carried Anna's answer to her noble lover: rage gave him strength, and between walking and running, he reached the mansion of Lord Sutton within one minute after the man got admittance. The next thing was to endeavour to soften the harsh ungrateful letter his lordship had just received.—He was shewn into the library, where he found that flower of nobility, trying to hide his mortified vanity and anger under the appearance of contempt.—“Very well, Mr. “Parson,” said he, with the open letter in his hand, “upon my honour, this same ward “of yours does you infinite credit.” “My “Lord, I beg, I intreat your Lordship”—bowing to the very ground.—“Oh, pray say “no more, the thing is at an end; I shall “certainly not trouble Miss any more: yet,”
—swearing

—swearing pretty roundly, “ a man of my
“ rank, my connections, my fortune and
“ figure in the world, to be refused by a
“ wench with not a sixpence—but it is now
“ plain she was undone; that Welch fel-
“ low had certainly gotten her: it was im-
“ possible she could else have been so blind
“ to the honour he had done her; but she
“ would dearly repent it.” — “ That she
“ shall indeed, my good Lord,” answered
Dalton; “ if your Lordship gives her up, she
“ shall rot in a jail.” At this threat, the
noble, munificent countenance of the peer
brightened up: he agreed she deserved no
favour, either from his good friend or him-
self, nor should she find any; but when he
was acquainted with what had passed in the
morning, he blamed Dalton for his well-
meant zeal, wisely concluding, if there really
was a connection between her and Edwin, it
was likely he would be applied to by her
on such an exigence. However, after many
arguments *pro* and *con*, it was determined
Dalton should sue out a writ against Anna
for one hundred and fifty pounds, and take
down

down an officer, in order, if circumstances should render it necessary, to oblige her to return with him to town; and his Lordship condescended to be of the party.—But the Supreme Power, who counteracts the deepest-laid schemes, rendered this step the means of disconcerting the whole matter; for had they not been met, as I have related, by our heroine, her terror at the step she had taken would have certainly carried her back, where, in all human probability, she must at last have become the property of the man she most hated on earth.

She was not missed when they arrived at the village.—In order to avoid any alarm, Dalton and his noble companion alighted before they got to the house; and the officer was directed to put up the coach, and wait at the King's Head.

Mrs. Dalton and Peggy were at tea, when this unexpected honour dropped in on them; grievous was the tale they had to relate.—The shock poor Anna had received dwelt too strongly on Mrs. Dalton's mind, not to be repeated with sincere distress; and Lord
Sutton

Sutton was warned, by a look from the husband, not to trust her with any more of their intentions than could be avoided.

Mortified and enraged, as was that nobleman, he could not help betraying different emotions, during her account of the pitiable situation of his lovely conquests, to find himself, and what was more, his fortune, held in contempt, at the same moment that he yet adored the implacable object, who thus dared reject his love, and scorn his power: to know, when they were of the most consequence to his peace, all his arts, all his plausible, his studied manœuvres, failed in their expected effect, inflicted on him a sensible grief; and the idea, that she who occasioned it was likewise miserable, gave him a malignant pleasure. But again, when fancy brought to his mental view, the lovely, the enchanting maid, her in whom all his wishes centered, torn with anguish, sinking with distress and fear; feelings of tenderness, utter strangers before to his callous heart, softened and unmanned him; equally unable to bear sensations so new, or to exist under
the

the torture of suspense, he desired to see her, and begged Mrs. Dalton to assure her it should be, if she wished it, the last time he would trouble her.

She went up stairs—but returned in a second, with a look of consternation, and told them, Anna was not there !

“ What ! was she so soon recovered ? Was she out ? Oh,” said Dalton, “ I’ll rouse her, I’ll warrant you ;” and, going up, called loudly on her name at every step. In short, the apartments, the gardens, and environs, were all searched ; no Anna was to be found. “ Well, it was very fly,” Peggy said ; “ but she was undoubtedly gone to Mrs. Wellers’.” She was dispatched to inquire—she had not been there—that lady went early to town, and was not returned.

A general council was now called, and inquiries made in the neighbourhood. Mr. Bently’s parting words were over-heard by Peggy—she would lay her life Anna was gone to the Abbey. Another messenger was sent there, and returned unsuccessful. Lord Sutton could not think of going home on
that

that uncertainty, though his heart sunk within him, and jealousy was among the new and comfortable inmates of his bosom.

Late in the evening, a message was brought from Mrs. Wellers, desiring to see Miss Mansel in the morning: they avoided giving the servant a hint of her absence, at the request of Lord Sutton, whose pride was gratified in the superior notice taken of her he so ardently wished to call his own. He staid there that night, but without even lying down, and respect obliged the family to accompany him.

The morning came, but without satisfaction; and the anxiety of his soul so affected his health, and lowered his spirits, as to render him an object truly deplorable: he desired some tea, and ordered the coach to convey him home.

CHAPTER LII.

Candid Conclusions.

WHILE the tea was getting ready, Mrs. Wellers, having heard some rumour of the elope-

elopement, which was confirmed by Anna's not coming to her appointment, walked down to Dalton's. As she had no knowledge of Lord Sutton's person, (and either that was not an emblem of his rank and dignity, or she was so stupid as not to observe it) her eyes brushed slightly over him to Mrs. Dalton, whose looks plainly spoke her want of rest, and disturbed mind : she asked after Miss Mansel.

Mrs. Dalton burst into tears ; her apprehensions were secret, but dismal ; and she dreaded every rap at the door would fatally confirm the sad presage her mind had formed. Her husband, who now saw the matter would become the talk of the place, thought to make the best of it, by saying they had had a few words, and Miss Mansel had left them in a huff. Mrs. Wellers sighed, but made no comments on either side. After a little insignificant chat, she took her leave ; it was, so much had she been influenced in favour of Anna, painful to her to encounter the surmises and hints, she knew would employ the whole village : she could say nothing

thing in vindication of her favourite, and it was irksome to her to hear condemned a young creature, who had made so great an interest in her esteem, in so short a time : she therefore took the field-way home ; where, when she arrived, Mr. Bently was waiting for her. “ Why, Madam Wellers,” said he eagerly, “ your little friend is naught
“ at last ; she is gone off, it seems. Well,
“ well, I have been deceived by man, and
“ betrayed by woman ; and since this girl,
“ whose looks carried the innocence of in-
“ fancy into the maturity of beauty, has
“ likewise imposed on my hopes by a
“ false appearance, I will no more be a
“ dupe to my own wishes : but, Madam,
“ can you say nothing for her ? will *your*
“ candour give her up ? Do say some-
“ thing—for the credit of human nature,
“ do—say this is a cursed scandalous place,
“ that the girl is ill used, and that she is
“ under your protection ;—for the love of
“ God, do.”

“ I wish, Mr. Bently,” answered the good woman, “ I could with truth say all
“ you wish in her favour.”

“ What,

“ What, you can’t then ? and she is not
“ gone to your son’s ? Cursed be the arts
“ that seduced the fairest work of heaven !
“ But is it quite over ? can nothing be done
“ to save or reclaim her ? Half my fortune
“ would I this moment give to have her
“ now sitting at your right hand in inno-
“ cence and honour.”

Mrs. Wellers, whose soul, fraught with every virtue of humanity, had all her sex’s softness about it, and whose attachment to Anna had been as pleasing as strong, was affected beyond expression at the earnestness of the generous Bently : she dropped a tear which infected her companion.

At this moment a Mrs. Wilson was announced. This person was formerly a servant in the family, married the coachman, and was at this period mistress of the inn heretofore described : she was an old maid when she entered the holy pale ; was then, and still continued, a woman of that volubility, and thirst of knowledge, few things passed in the village, she was not acquainted with,
either

either in the public or private transactions of its inhabitants; and fewer still she did not repeat with her own comments and additions. She knew Madam Wellers was very fond of the girl at the Methodist Parson's, though she had not taken half the notice of a niece of her's she had recommended to succeed in her place: her natural love of gossip was therefore increased by two motives; one was, a desire of shewing Mrs. Wellers how ill judged her partiality was; the other, a bit of revenge for her presuming to take a young person into greater favour than her afore said niece. She still continued to wash her mistress's laces: the excuse for this morning's call, was to know if she wanted any thing done; and before an answer could be given, asked if she had heard the news?

Mrs. Wellers guessed it respected Anna, and not being under any restraint with this woman, answered in the negative, and bid her repeat what she had heard.

“ Why, dear me, Ma'am, that young
“ body at Parson Dalton's has shewn her
“ cloven

“ cloven foot at last ; in good earnest she is
“ gone off with the gentleman, he who used
“ you so ill, Sir, curtsying to Bently :
“ what a pity it was you was so deceived
“ in her !—every body wondered how it
“ could be.”

“ That she is gone,” said Mrs. Wellers,
“ I believe, but not with any gentleman.”
“ Ah, law, ma’am, well, to be sure, it’s
“ vastly good in you : but indeed ’tis a
“ great pity. Dr. Parker’s old groom lives
“ with him ; and he told my husband and
“ I, no longer since than yesterday, what
“ a fine beautiful lady his wife is, and
“ what a power of money she brought him :
“ for my part, I think ’tis a shame such
“ fluts are suffered to live ; I would have
“ them burnt alive. There was he, in a
“ horseman’s great coat, and Tom out of
“ his livery ; I hardly knew him, I am
“ sure, waiting and peeping about at our
“ house, till he got her off ; but it will
“ come home to the huffy, that’s a sure
“ thing.”

Mrs. Wellers was astonished—Mr. Bently
questioned

questioned her over and over ; she varied not—indeed there was little room for variation, as it was literally true. Mr. Edwin having sent his valet to reconnoitre, and hearing by him that Anna walked alone to the hill, watched for that opportunity of following and speaking to her : her sudden illness reached Mrs. Wilson ; and she, according to custom, set it going. Edwin was soon informed of an accident that rendered his journey a fruitless one ; nevertheless he waited, till, by the same channel of intelligence, he heard of her recovery, and then returned to London. Mr. Bently groaned, and beat a tatoo with his oaken towel ; Mrs. Wellers was lost in thought, when Dr. Collet made his appearance ; and Wilson was ordered to wait in the kitchen.

In the assistance given our heroine, Dr. Collet had been wholly actuated by the divine impulse of humanity and compassion ; he had not at the time suffered a thought of the propriety, or even the legality, of the act to intervene between his philanthropy and his prudence ; he had
solemnly

solemnly engaged to put his seal on her effects: but it had not occurred to him it was proper he should know her motives for the desperate step she was taking: he had promised young Herbert to watch all her actions; and yet had assisted her to move to a place which he knew nothing of: those things considered, he was out of humour with his own conduct; and mused on the part it now became him to act, till, bewildered in his ideas, he walked to the hill to communicate the whole transaction, and to take Mrs. Wellers' advice and opinion on it. Mr. Bently and the lady were at first barely attentive, but the story soon made interested auditors, when it was concluded: "Then," cried Mr. Bently with transport, "she is not at last gone with that
" puppy; and she was willing to give up
" her finery to pay her debts, poor girl,
" though given by a friend who loved her
" too! Ah, lovely girl, thou wilt find
" many, I fear, who will supply that loss.
" Love! Yes, the lion loves the lamb to
" destroy it: but it shall be thine own
" fault,

“ fault, if, whether now innocent or guilty,
“ thy future steps lead not to honour and
“ peace.” Mrs. Wellers’ first impressions,
at hearing Collet’s relation, were those of
joy ; but when she laid every circumstance
together, there appeared nothing in her
application to the doctor, for his assistance,
to clear her from the suspicion of going
with Edwin : the manner of her departure,
at the instant she knew enquiries were
making into her character, was rather a
confirmation of the worst ; and, indeed,
was one strong reason why he was dissatis-
fied at his own conduct, which appeared,
on reflection, rather an act of weakness than
humanity. Not so, Mr. Bently ; he was
obstinately bent on retaining every favoura-
ble impression of her, and so peevish at the
least hint that tended to set any part of her
conduct in a blamable light, that Mrs.
Wellers suffered him to depart without ac-
quainting him, as she did the doctor, with
all her reasons for fearing the worst.

CHAPTER LIII.

French Policy.

WHEN we left the Edwin family, it was not with the most favourable ideas of the stability of their friendships, or the consistency of their conduct.

Frajan had strong reasons to fear, as well as to hate Anna. No sooner had she shut each avenue of kindness to her at Melmoth Lodge, than, insatiate in avarice as revenge, she began to consider how, in every point of view, the innocent girl's ruin could be turned most to her interest. Half the money Mrs. Melmoth, by desire of the Colonel, had ordered, she put into her own purse: void of principle, modesty, or common honesty, it was not to be expected the amiable governante would lose any opportunity of blackening the character of a young creature she had so deeply injured, and whose return to favour would discover her fraud and iniquity. One enormous act of wickedness

edness too often is succeeded by another; encouraged by the success, or necessitated to conceal the past, the progression of vice, after the first plunges, becomes not only easy, but convenient. Madame Frajan wanted not these inducements; the money was already her own. Some point lace of Mrs. Melmoth's became next a temptation, too invitingly in her way to be resisted: Anna was employed in looking it over, the morning of her dismissal from the Lodge. It was very elegant and valuable; but, had it been ten times more so, Mrs. Melmoth would not have thought of demanding it of our heroine before her departure. In a few days, however, the lace was inquired after; the house was searched from top to bottom; it was no where to be found—it was certainly stolen. Frajan insisted on having *her* trunks and drawers examined, although, *Dieu mercie*, she had heretofore been trusted with jewels, to the value of thousands, and could have her character attested by some of the first English ladies; but, as it had been her misfortune to be companioned in the manner she

had been since her residence at the Lodge, not only her trunks, but her person must be searched. In this reasonable request Mrs. Melmoth begged she might by all means be indulged. No lace could be found; and the child, on whom the wind, a few months before, was not suffered to blow too roughly, in whose bosom vice of any kind had not found a place, was branded as a thief. Mr. Melmoth's affairs were in too much confusion to suffer him to attend to the chit-chat of his house; and his wife's credulity laid her too open to the artifices of Frajan: she was the easier duped by her, as the story spread abroad, and was implicitly believed at Ashby Grove. Colonel Gorget protested it was what he expected; that gallant veteran, though he had not a doubt about who had really got the lace, was pleased to encourage any report that would add to the disgrace of the poor orphan, and for ever bar each passage, humanity and regret might else have opened, for her re-entrance to favour at Melmoth Lodge.

Thus,

Thus, first among the servants, then in the village, thence into every gentleman's house in the vicinity, thence to the next market-town, and so over the county by degrees, a lamentable story of Mrs. Melmoth's robbery, and by whom, was circulated, and universally believed; with this simple addition, the one fruit of point was magnified into three, to which were added some jewels of great value.

This tale at last coming to Mr. Melmoth's ears, greatly accelerated the discharge of Frajan; he turned her out of the house the instant he heard it, declaring he should as soon suspect his own child of being dishonest as Anna.

On Frajan's return to London, she found her friend the Colonel in despair of recovering the fugitive Anna, but very civil to her, though unable to procure her admission into any other genteel family; and Lady Waldron, being at that time past fear of any discovery in the power of her *fille de chambre* to make, having been unfortunately interrupted, in a very interesting *tête à tête* with her

own footman, by the person most concerned in the discovery, namely, her Lord, necessity obliged the accomplished French woman to lower her views ; and she afterwards filled the several stations of

Figure-dancer at the play-house,

Bar-maid at an inn,

Sultana to the master of a strolling puppet-show,

Teacher at a boarding-school, and

Housekeeper to a single gentleman *friseur*, from whom she had received notice to provide herself, at the time her ennobled patron formed the design of giving the *coup de grace* to his fortune, by carrying off, in his fifty-sixth year, an heiress under twenty-one.

Lord Sutton was introduced to Lady Edwin and her daughter, at a fashionable assembly, where he was an invited guest. The riches of the Edwins were exaggerated by the world: the oeconomy of their well regulated expences enabled them to do so many benevolent, and even magnificent things, and their payments of all kinds were so punctual, that, ample as was their fortune, fame

doubled

doubl'd it. The ancient and honourable house of Trevannion was likewise universally known and acknowledged ; they were the first women at the assembly, and his pride attached him to their party during the evening. The weak side of Lady Edwin was family pride ; of her daughter, personal vanity. Lord Sutton's study was woman's weakness, and his triumph their folly : he made so good a use of his penetration, that he received from Lady Edwin a general invitation to Grosvenor-square.

There, in his frequent visits, he saw his way to Cecilia ; he artfully exhibited his own riches as a temptation whereby he might possess himself of hers. He soon became enamoured, he adored, he died for her ; and so far succeeded, as to obtain her permission to apply to her parents for their consent to his felicity : but Welch obstinacy was not to be subdued by Irish fraud ; for, though he had made himself master of every memorable event in Lady Edwin's family, though he knew the particulars of all the battles in which her ancestors had distin-

guished themselves; and he had the princely Llewellins, the heroic Tudors, and the valiant Hughs of her race, at his finger's end; it would not clear, from his own genealogy, the blot of Gorget.

The son of an Irish adventurer marry into the family of Trevannion! the offer was not simply rejected, it was an insult; Lady Edwin would not hear it mentioned; she should blush to look on the busts of her progenitors after so ignominious an act: all she could be prevailed on, and that with great difficulty, was to conceal her indignation, and put a negative on Lord Sutton's proposal, without assigning any particular reason.

Mortifying as this rejection was, he concealed the rancour it occasioned; the pride of Lady Edwin stimulated his own; hers could not be greater than his: the difference was, hers was founded on a real grandeur of soul, that valued the virtues as much as the honour of her ancestors, and she piqued herself in equally supporting both: his was the poor boast of riches accumulated with disgrace, and wickedness crowned with success.

success. Not despairing of bringing the daughter to avenge his cause on the mother, he affected to submit with respect and patience to a sentence which robbed him, he swore to Miss Edwin, of more than life. Like a philosopher, while he laid a plan to undermine parental authority; like himself, with a guarded caution, he continued his footing in the family, paying his devoirs at the shrine of vanity and folly, assiduously improving every opportunity of ingratiating himself into the young Lady's favour.

Miss Edwin began to grow extremely tired of restraint, though she had as little as most ladies of the age, in her purse, her dress, and her visitors; but the dignity of virtue, and the regular, honourable system of conduct adopted by her parents, forbade the dear flirtation, the polite freedom, of some part of the *beau monde*. A married lover, for instance, Lady Edwin would have thundered to have seen her daughter smile upon; a known libertine she admitted not within her doors; and all coquetry she utterly despised.

How much more delightful, then, to figure away as Lady Sutton, accountable to no one for her actions ! As to the old Lord, it would be enough for him to have the honour of so fine a creature to bear his name, spend his fortune, and, at times, when no more agreeable engagements offered, to preside at his table, without his presuming to interfere in her conduct.

She had nearly brought herself to listen to his proposals of elopement, when her journey to Bedfordshire suspended his operations; but, like a wise general, Lord Sutton took care to have a friend in the garrison, in the person of Madame Frajan, whom he procured to wait on the young lady; and, at the time they returned to town, all was ready for the last step : he was to sigh, swear, and vow ; Frajan, to plead the cause of liberty and pleasure—when vengeance, in the form of an angel, stopped his career.

Concluding, as I said before, that Anna was really the daughter of Mrs. Melmoth, and quite out of his reach, the despair of again meeting her had conquered the violence

lence of his appetite, without effacing from his heart the impression of her beauty. Anna Dalton was often present to his imagination; her opening charms recurred to his memory, and excited desire when nothing else could.

When, therefore, this trusty confidant brought him the news of her re-appearance, and that, in a situation to warrant a renewal of his former hopes, the journey to Scotland, the riches, nor the family of Miss Edwin, had any longer attractions: he liberally rewarded his intelligencer, and sent her home with full instructions for her conduct, and a promise of reward for her future services.

After reckoning the moments till ten o'clock, he repaired to Lady Edwin's assembly, where the first sight of Anna drove every other thought of woman out of his head; his heart became a willing victim to the mature loveliness of the child he had followed with his unhallowed wishes: every glance of her eye, every turn of her countenance, and every gesture, gave him emotions, both of love and fear. He sat, indeed, by Miss Edwin; he attempted to

compliment her; but his looks, his admiration, and his passion, were all directed to Anna: and his hopes now rested, with anxious eagerness, on the assistance of Frajan, to whom he sent a billet before he left the house.

The envy and jealousy, which had banished from Miss Edwin's mind every kind thought of the young person she had once honoured with her friendship and correspondence, was increased by her observation of the looks directed from her noble lover to Anna. Pride, in this case, was as strong an excitement to hatred and dislike, as inclination in that of Herbert; yet the rancour of her disposition must have recoiled on herself, had not her good fortune furnished her with so respectable an assistant as Madame Frajan.—After our heroine retired from the drawing-room, and the assembly broke up, Cecilia begged an audience of Sir William and Lady Edwin.

She began, with great affected humility, to ask their forgiveness for what had passed in the morning, alledging her natural warmth

warmth of temper, and her vexation at seeing so very unworthy a person held in such esteem in their family.—Lady Edwin coloured, and rising hastily, was going out of the room, when Cecilia threw herself at her feet, and asked only to be heard.

Sir William doted on his children; and this softness and humility in his daughter, so unusual, and so unexpected, might have gotten from him half his estate, had that been the object in pursuit; he intreated his lady to hear his dear girl, and raising her in his arms, bid her speak, assuring her of all that a parent's fondest love could do to make her happy.—A well-timed flood of tears completed the triumph of the artful daughter over her guileless parents.—Lady Edwin was re-seated, and Cecilia, after a decent time taken to re-compose her features, desired her woman might be admitted, who could acquaint them of something in Anna Mansel's character, which would convince them of the little pretensions she could have to the rank she held in their family.

Sir William wished to do without a French evidence but his daughter persisted, and Frajan was ordered in.

The account given by her of Anna was, that when she resided in Mr. Melmoth's house, in quality of governess to her children, the person who now had the honour of being companion to Lady Edwin lived there, having been taken off the parish by Mrs. Melmoth; that she had ungratefully returned their charity, by every species of ill behaviour, and had at last robbed her benefactress; that she was then sent away to her parochial settlement, since which she had not heard of, or even seen her from that time (three or four years ago) till this morning, when she was no less surprised to meet her in her present situation, than to hear her addressed by the name of Mansel, her real one being Dalton.

This stroke, pre-concerted between her and Cecilia, had its effect: shame and surprise were blended in Lady Edwin's countenance; she professed she wanted faith: her sister, Mrs. Herbert, had recommended her

to them.—Was she certain as to her person, as well as facts?

“ Lord Sutton, Madam, is Mrs. Melmoth’s near relation; he was at the Lodge when the affair happened, and will, I dare say, confirm my account.” “ So you see, Madam,” said Miss Edwin, “ you have not only taken a beggar, a thief, and impostor, into your favour and confidence; but you have actually introduced her to your circle, and made her the companion of your children.”

The sorrow and mortification this account of Anna gave Lady Edwin, were, at those reproofs, changed to anger and resentment; she sent a card to Lord Sutton, to ask, if he had known Anna Dalton at Melmoth Lodge? if she were discharged from thence on ill behaviour? if her honesty were doubted? and, finally, if the young person who presided at her assembly, under the name of Mansel, were the same?

THE ANSWER.

“ Lord Sutton’s best compliments to Lady Edwin; assures her, it is with infinite
“ finite

" finite reluctance he answers the queries
 " contained in her card; but hopes, as the
 " girl was very young when Lord S. knew
 " her, time, and the great favour shewn
 " her by a person of Lady Edwin's rank,
 " may have worked a change in her dispo-
 " sition.

" Lord Sutton did know Anna Dalton
 " at Melmoth Lodge—she certainly was
 " not discharged for her goodness—her ho-
 " nesty was indeed much suspected—she is
 " the same person that lives with Lady Ed-
 " win as companion."

The moment this card was delivered to
 Lady Edwin, she wrote to Mrs. Herbert
 the letter which Anna was, as I have said
 before, ordered to deliver, severely re-
 proaching her for introducing into so an-
 cient and honourable a family, a person
 whose origin and actions were a disgrace to
 any place. She then recounted her crimes,
 as they had been represented to her; and
 bitterly added her change of name as a
 confirmation of the whole.

C H A P. LIV.

Polite Wedding.

MR S. Herbert sinking under domestic distress, which the dissipated and unfeeling conduct of her husband continually increased, was, though exceedingly shocked, less solicitous about the fate of Anna than in easier circumstances she would have been : she examined her only on the last part of the charge, and finding it well founded, gave herself no farther trouble, but obeyed the mandates of her enraged sister immediately, by discharging the fallen favourite ; and endeavoured to make her peace with the family, by recounting all she had, from the deceased Mrs. Mansel, known of her, which indeed amounted, as Miss Edwin said, to nothing, as she had been introduced at Llandore, as the near relation of the parson's wife.—This disgraceful history of the early part of her life, gave that young lady

lady an opportunity of entirely rooting out of her family, an object that mortified her vanity, and obstructed her views of conquest.

Mrs. Herbert and Patty were enjoined to hold no correspondence, or give any countenance to so worthless a creature. Mrs. Herbert engaged for them both, that they would not; and as for her daughter, overawed by her cousin, who, from her bosom friend, affected to treat the most amiable and gentle creature in the world with a haughty distance, the reverse of what she had been used to, she wanted courage to put in a word for her absent friend; though she well knew, from the tenour of her conduct, as well as the principles she had always adopted, and her practice of every female virtue, it was impossible she could be guilty of the mean vices laid to her charge. Though unable to speak in Grosvenor-square, when they returned to their lodgings, she was very eloquent to her mama, reminding her of a thousand instances of
goodness.

goodness, and even greatness of soul, they had been witnesses to in Anna.

Mrs. Herbert, more than half convinced by the generous pleadings of her daughter, would have been happy to indulge her, by again serving Anna; but she was not at liberty to act as she thought proper: Mr. Herbert's connections on one hand, and his neglect of his affairs on the other, had so involved his circumstances, that the large mortgage on their estate had been twice on the point of being foreclosed, when Lady Edwin's generosity and affection saved it.

It was now again in the same predicament, without the same resource.

Mr. Herbert was so far from wishing to conceal the causes of his ill management, that even in this excursion, he brought publicly his woman and her family with him, and the same attendants as if she had been his wife.

Sir William, enraged at the perpetual insults offered his sister, refused any more to assist her undeserving husband: this refusal

ful was avenged on the suffering wife, by the most injurious usage.

Dead to the calls of nature, and callous to the pleadings of humanity, it was of no import to him, that his amiable and promising son was obliged to his uncle for his present support at the University, and his hopes of an establishment in life; that his lovely daughter's charms were totally overlooked, for want of the golden bait, which drew half the town after her less charming cousin; or that his deserving wife owed to the fraternal love of her brother, even the contracted appearance she now made; while her fortune, her rank, and accomplishments entitled her to figure in the first circles. Since his mistress, and her children, could no longer be supported, it was not necessary for him to be farther on any terms with a wife who could not supply his profligate necessities.

Cecilia's dislike of Anna was very visible, and her interest over her father well known: insulted at home, dependent abroad, it was not for them, Mrs. Herbert said,
to

to set out champions for the distressed ; it might be their ruin ; she therefore begged her daughter to let this matter rest, at least for the present.

Young Edwin heard this new character of Anna with more pleasure than he chose to shew ; if she had lost her reputation, whether justly or not, she would be come-at-able, her pride would be less, and his conquest easier : his valet well knowing his attachment to Miss Mansel, when he heard her clothes were sending off, (a secret of that kind cannot remain long in a gentleman's family) watched with so good success, that he was able to inform his master where she was gone to, when he dressed him ; a piece of service which was handsomely acknowledged by Mr. Edwin.

A rich wife now becoming necessary to prevail on Sir William, to give him an independent establishment in life, when he might take to his arms the charmer for whom he sighed, when uncontrolled by the advice of his parents, and indifferent to the opinion of the world, he might keep, in the first

first style, the girl he loved : the charms of Miss Turbville became every day more attracting, and the passion of her lover more violent ; her consent was obtained, and at the importunate solicitations of Mr. Edwin, the marriage celebrated at the seat of the lady's guardian, in Bedfordshire, almost instantaneously.

Money does every thing in London ; and Seddon, with that glittering goad, contrived, in a month, to furnish their house with the most luxuriant elegance, before they went out of town. Mr. Edwin, taking Miss Herbert aside, asked her if she did not long to hear from her friend ? “ Yes, indeed, my dear cousin, I do,” answered she eagerly. “ Why then,” said he, “ write a note, and leave it in my library ; and,” smiling, “ I think I can promise you an answer.”

She did, directly, as she was instructed : but an accident happened to the answer, which drew on her the displeasure of all her family, and more particularly that of Mr. Edwin.

An

An heiress, a toast, a coquette, was Miss Turbville, with just as much understanding as was necessary to form such a character: she married Mr. Edwin with a disposition, which, had it been improved by attention and affection on his side, might have changed the unamiable part of her character, and rendered her a valuable member of society: his person uncommonly handsome, his talents unquestionably good, and those adorned with every advantage that education could bestow; his manners insinuating; his address pleasing, and perfectly polite; it was hardly possible for Miss Turbville to avoid being satisfied and happy in the choice which her deceased parents had made for her.

Mr. Edwin's person and manners, if not enforced by a great estate, would have made an impression on her heart, though, perhaps, not of that serious nature as to induce her to forego that advantage; she therefore, notwithstanding her passion for admiration, thought, when she married, but of loving, and being beloved by her husband.

But

But a very few days, nay hours, had past, after the wedding; before she found too strong reasons to suspect the match, on his side, had been perfectly one of convenience.

The large fortune she was heiress to, with an agreeable person, great taste in dress, and infinite spirit and vivacity, had made her a divinity with half the fops of the age; flattered, followed, and caressed, in every circle in which she appeared, she had not suspected any man could be possessed of such charms and attractions, so universally acknowledged, without being transported with love and gratitude; but the cold, inanimate setting-out of Edwin's career in his married state, his increasing neglect both of his wife and home, afforded grounds for a different tale.

She was jealous of his want of affection, without any particular reason for suspicion. Cecilia Edwin, with equal pride, vanity, and taste for pleasure, had more art, more cunning, and less beauty, than her sister-in-law, whose conduct she was; her observations of her brother had made a discovery which

which she was anxious to improve, and she was, in consequence, under pretence of idleness, often loitering in his library and apartments: her keys, of which she had a great number, were tried upon the lock of his writing-table in vain: it was a very good one; and curiosity was in despair, when one morning Mr. Edwin, whose visits at Brookes's were become long and frequent, had returned home fatigued, and half asleep, at seven in the morning, and his valet being likewise tired, they had both quitted the dressing-room without perceiving his keys, which were left on the table, and were seen by Miss Edwin, in her usual perambulations over his apartments.

With trembling eagerness she flew to the repository of her brother's secrets, and instantly found Anna's note to Miss Herbert, which Mr. Edwin had not thought proper to deliver. "Now," said she, agitated beyond expression, "shall I find out the cunning of that creature; and now will I expose to my sister the villany of her husband."

She was mistaken; no villany appeared: the note was to her cousin. "Fool!" said she, "he is actually carrying on a correspondence between his mistress and her lover; this letter to Miss Herbert is meant at Charles; however, with or without your leave, my wife brother, I shall take the liberty of opening this correspondence to your wife:" but after perusing it over and over again, she found nothing appear that, instead of criminating Anna, did not speak highly to her praise.

So direct a contradiction to her suspicions striking her very forcibly, a transient regret arose in her mind for depriving Anna of her mother's favour: but it was only transient; for Frajan urging the injury offered to Mrs. Edwin, in a correspondence with Mr. Edwin, for which he could have but one motive, and that a shameful one, and reminding her, if she had any designs upon Charles Herbert, how necessary it was to persuade his sister of her dislike to Edwin, the spirit both of rage and jealousy

jealousy continued to influence her against the unoffending Anna.

The moment she met Mrs. Edwin, the fullen, dissatisfied look of that young bride kindled into resentment, by the sight of the inclosure to her husband ; she now found a reason for his deserting her bed, for his cutting indifference, and cold neglect.— She wept, and tore her hair ; hysterics and bitter reproaches accompanied this discovery, as she called it, of her husband's infidelity.

The carriage was immediately ordered, and Lady Cecilia was surprised to see at her toilette both her daughters, her attendants being at their request dismissed. The letter was produced.

Lady Edwin was not more haughty in her disposition, than humane in her sentiments ; the pride of high blood was accompanied with a generosity of soul, and an elevation of ideas, that she deemed hereditary virtues, and which, next to hereditary honours, was most valuable in her estimation. That a girl she had turned from her

house and family, in a manner so disgraceful, should have strength of mind to write such a note, so conformable to her own ideas of propriety; that a mind so vitiated in its own practices could so charmingly dictate to that of another, was a contradiction she could not reconcile: and the warmth of her temper never suffering her either to be a moderate friend, or placable enemy, her partiality for Anna, and in the same degree her anger to those who had, as she instantly believed, falsely accused her, returned; but the situation of her daughter-in-law, young, fatherless and motherless, deserted by her husband at so early a period, which she found to be too truly the case, affected her exceedingly.

His propensity to gaming, which he had always secretly indulged, was now public: he was married to one woman, while his heart preferred another; that other, the most likely, had he been united to her, to have drawn him from every evil habit; and, not obtaining her on the terms which only now it was in his power to offer, as likely to
make

make him desperately careless of the future; or, if he did gain her, no doubt could be entertained of her entire power over him.

Thus, then, Lady Cecilia found the bright prospects her imagination had formed, of seeing the honour and virtue of her ancestors perpetuated in her son, clouded by fears of a most alarming nature; the more painful, as she could not reveal them to either of the young ladies.

Mrs. Edwin's tears and distress called for, and received every consolation maternal affection could offer; she assured her, and begged her to believe, a little time and experience, joined with the unabating tenderness of so charming a wife, must have its weight in the mind of a sensible man; and, "with respect to this paper," added she, darting an angry look at her daughter, "which your officious, and I wish I could say well-meaning curiosity, has exposed, for God's sake destroy it. No one reprehensible thought is here seen on the part of Anna Mansel; you find, the only degree of blame she can incur in the

“ transaction, by clandestinely correspond-
“ ing with Edwin, is done away in her
“ note. Should your brother, Miss, know
“ of the liberty you have taken with his
“ letter, he would not incur my censure by
“ putting a repetition of such a breach of
“ the laws of honour out of your power, by
“ forbidding you his house.”

This threat had more weight than any other part of the conversation on the two ladies; the idea of separation was not to be borne. Young Edwin did not intend to return to Wales this summer: if he quitted London at all, it would be to a family mansion of his Lady's in Shropshire; and, if Miss Edwin quarrelled with him, she must go with her silly mother, and be content to converse with her simple cousin Patty, or be chiefly alone: the first was a bore, the latter intolerable; with a very ill grace; therefore, she consented to obey her mother, stipulating only, that Patty should be severely reprehended, and forbid, under pain of their general displeasure, ever more to repeat an act of such disobedience: in this she

she was indulged. As Lady Cecilia was very angry with Miss Herbert, the prudence of Anna but aggravated her offence; and though she did not think it necessary to reveal it to them, she had serious apprehensions of her son's conduct. In her heart she yet esteemed our heroine, and would have gladly reinstated her in her family; but, at present, it appeared totally improper.

She therefore sent for Mrs. Herbert and her daughter, and, in the presence of Mrs. Edwin and Cecilia, treated her with less tenderness and more asperity than she had ever done, or indeed had occasion to do, before.

Mrs. and Miss Edwin then left them, haughtily returning Mrs. Herbert's civilities, and totally overlooking those of her daughter.

Mrs. Herbert, with all the eloquence of grief, besought her sister to forgive the poor girl for what had happened; and Patty joining her supplications, Lady Edwin was soon appeased.

Seeing they still appeared very dispirited, she inquired with great tenderness into the cause.—Mrs. Herbert, with looks of sadness and despair, kept silent ; but Patty, bursting into tears, informed her Mr. Herbert had been that morning arrested for a debt of seven hundred pounds, contracted by Mrs. Nichols ; and that he was carried, at his own request, to the King's Bench prison, as he said he was wholly without resources to pay that and many other demands he expected would be made on him.

Not less surprised than affected, Lady Edwin affectionately embraced them, saying, she never should forgive herself for aggravating, at such a period, the distress they were in ; she insisted, as she did not know how Sir William would chuse to act towards Mr. Herbert, to take on herself the government of them, and that they should directly send for what things they had at their lodgings, and ordered the maid who attended them to follow : the man, she supposed, his master might want.

Mrs.

Mrs. Herbert and her daughter were too little accustomed to such scenes, not to rejoice at leaving a place where they had suffered such mortification and disgrace: their baggage was soon removed, and before night they were comfortably settled in Grosvenor-square, Lady Edwin omitting no one thing that could alleviate their distress: but Sir William was inexorable to Mr. Herbert, nor would hear of his affairs, except he would relinquish that estate, it was no longer in his power to keep, to his son; on which terms he offered once more to pay off the mortgage.

This was refused with scorn by Mr. Herbert; whose mistress being removed with him into the liberties of the prison, said, he wanted nothing of them.

Sir William enraged at his hardened villainy, refused to hear even his beloved sister, in behalf of a man so lost to every sense of honour; and, to avoid any farther solicitations, he was pre-determined to reject, prevailed on Lady Edwin to leave town immediately. Mrs. Herbert declined accompa-

nying them: she had hitherto fulfilled, to the utmost of her power, her conjugal duties; nor could she now, in the hour of distress, notwithstanding his libertine conduct, prevail on herself to desert her husband. He had forbidden her coming to him; but she chose to stay within reach of serving the father of her children.

C H A P. LV.

Broken Bones.

YOUNG Herbert, whose ill state of health prevented his being at Mr. Edwin's wedding, was sent for to town on this grievous occasion.—Though fond of his mother, whose idol he was, and always feeling for her ill treatment, he did not think himself excused by the bad opinion he entertained of the morals of his father, from paying his duty to him as his son.

Indeed

Indeed that unhappy man had ever treated each of his children with indulgence and tenderness, though he so blindly ran on in actions he well knew must in the end ruin their fortunes. Mrs. Herbert's jointure was all that was left of the wreck of their once affluent circumstances.—He had never proposed to her parting with it; and if he had, her strong maternal feelings would have refused a sacrifice for which her dear boy would suffer.

Charles found his father in a situation which wrung his soul, in a paltry lodging at a grocer's shop, up one pair of narrow stairs, in dirty linen, and with an unshaved face. At a table, with his bottle before him, sat Mr. Herbert; his once handsome person lost in the slovenly disguise of inebriety and indolence.—On one side sat his mistress, with two of her children, on the other a man in naval uniform: they were in a roar of mirth, when the appearance of young Herbert, in whose countenance the distress of his mind was visibly pictured, brought the blush of shame into his father's cheek,

and imposed silence on his companions—Charles was at first only sensible of the dreadful change in Mr. Herbert's circumstances: to visit him in prison, and to know that his vices brought him there, were facts that at once filled him with compassion and shame—but the changed figure of a beloved parent, took from him all power of reflection. — In the effusions of filial tenderness, he remembered only the wretched fate of his father, without thinking on the iniquitous life in which it had originated.

Mr. Herbert was not an ill-natured man; the agony in which he beheld a son, of whom he had been always proud, brought to his mind, in full force, the injuries he had done his family: shame and grief overwhelmed him; and when Charles, with solemn respect, asked if nothing could be done to relieve him from a state equally distressing and disgraceful, he hid his face, and wept aloud.

A pause ensued.

Young Herbert had then a view of his
father's

father's companions--He recollected Nichols when she waited on his mother : a glow of indignation took possession of those features which but a moment before expressed nothing but duty and affection--Darting a contemptuous look at her, he bid her leave the room--She, heated with liquor, refused to obey him ; on which, forgetting the respect due to his father's presence, he rose to turn her out.

Nichols was violent in her temper, and virulent in her language ; her rage increased with her resistance, and her outcries brought the man whom she called brother to her assistance : he was a stout, ill-looking fellow, about thirty-five, and made up to Herbert, in a threatening posture.--The young man, whose natural strength and courage was increased by a sense of a father's ruin, and the injuries of a mother, who was now full in his mind, with all her sorrows about her, bursting with rage and anguish, as an object more suitable to him, he instantly let go the woman, and seizing
on

On her champion, threw him down stairs, where he lay senseless.

The alarm given by such an affair was soon spread; a surgeon was immediately sent for, who found his collar-bone broken, and one hip dislocated; and, moreover, from the habit of body he was in, pronounced him in the utmost danger: the woman tore her hair, and ran about distracted, vowing she would have blood for blood

Those threats from one he well knew capable of putting them in execution, struck Mr. Herbert to the soul: it was in vain he implored her to be calm, to wait the event, and to have in consideration, that it was *his son* she so violently vowed to be the destruction of.

Instead of the effects he wished his entreaties to have, it only exasperated her more, and several expressions she let drop, giving him reason to suppose her concern was for a person criminally dear to her, though he had been looked on, and supported by him as her brother, he threw himself into the arms of his son, crying, "Oh !
" Charles, Charles, canst thou yet bear the
" presence

“ presence of a father, who, for that devil,
“ has brought thy amiable mother, thy
“ lovely sister, and thyself to ruin; who, for
“ her, and for wretches like her, has entailed
“ poverty and dependance on his posterity;
“ and who now, by the vile excess of
“ wickedness, has perhaps brought his only
“ son to an untimely end!

“ Fly, Charles; leave me, while yet the
“ confusion and the absence of that fiend
“ will admit it!—Save, for the sake of thy
“ poor mother, a life of such consequence
“ to her; let not my crimes drive her to
“ madness; let them not rob my innocent
“ Patty of her only protector.”

Charles's heart, wrung by the grief of his father, and shocked at the likely consequences of his rashness, yet felt a joy not to be described, at this confession of his sense of the errors of his life; he entreated him to be comforted; now, that he was sensible of the wrong steps he had taken, fortune would again smile on him.

“ Oh, never, never!” answered the distracted man.—“ Go, go, my dear, my noble
“ ble

“ ble son—if thou wouldst not rob me of
“ my senses, let me know thee out of dan-
“ ger—Swear thou wilt instantly quit the
“ kingdom—trifle not with my agony—
“ leave me, I command thee, this instant,
“ if (running to his pistol) thou wouldst
“ not see me add suicide to my other sins.”
—Terrified at this threat, he swore to obey
him.

The vile woman had now left the room,
to assist in carrying up the man; in the con-
fusion and hurry it was therefore possible to
pass unnoticed. “ Fetch another surgeon,”
said Mr. Herbert to his son, “ this moment.”
On that pretence, he passed the people in
the house; and, what was still more lucky,
the constables, who had been sent for on the
first alarm by the outrageous Nichols.

When he reached the opposite side, he
looked up at his father’s apartment, where
he saw him standing watching eagerly whe-
ther he had escaped; which finding he had,
he waved his hand, pointing to the youth,
meaning for him to go to France: this
he resolved to do; but he had matters to
settle,

settle, of more consequence to him than even the preservation of existence : his mother's weak health and spirits must be armed for the news ; and there was *one* more person he wished not to leave England without seeing.

He had heard from his sister, of Anna's disgrace in Grosvenor-square : the vices laid to her charge he gave not the least credit to ; but he was not so clear in his suspicions of her connection with Edwin, which he was now confirmed in, by hearing of the note he conveyed to her, from his sister.

Attached to her from principle, as well as passion, which had increased in every interview, he found himself unable to conquer his prejudices in her favour. — Notwithstanding so many reasons to think with less respect on a woman of doubtful character, his partial fancy wandered over her perfections, and dwelt so strongly on her charms ; reason, reflection, nor the insuperable bars of fate, had power to lessen her empire over his mind.—Though his peace was destroyed, and his health impaired by
the

the continual struggles of hope and fear in his bosom, he at last stole from Oxford, and (what mystery will not love develope?) traced Miss Mansel to Dalton's; it was at this period he made his acquaintance with Collet, with whom he regularly corresponded; it was him he wanted to see in the first instance; and, as he was going, perhaps for ever, to endeavour to obtain one interview with Anna, merely to catch a last look, to confess to her his hopeless love, and to try to prevail on her, for her own sake, to return to Parson Mansel's, and to bid her adieu for ever!

He crossed the water; and, taking a coach from Tower-Hill, arrived at Layton the very day after Anna left it. Collet gave him a most friendly reception, and told him he had just written an account that he was sorry to give him of Miss Mansel.

Mr. Herbert's countenance, when he entered, partly with the agitations of his mind, and partly with the idea in which he had indulged himself, of venting a passion that destroyed him, at the feet of the object who
inspired

inspired it, was flushed, and changed to a deadly pale, not daring to ask what he dreaded to hear: for, however strong appearances were against our heroine, the rooted good opinion and respect which her constant society and conduct had given him at Llandore, and the established amiable character she bore during her residence there, as well as the love expressed for her by so good a man, and so worthy a woman as the rector and his wife, together with the secret hopes which ever accompany a lover's wish, had always flattered him she might yet be innocent, though not for him.

But now Collet's dismal countenance, at once the ensign and pity of ill news, shocked him beyond the power of utterance. After a little pause, however, his reason reassumed its sway, and he heard the account of her elopement with emotions of sorrow, in which compassion was visibly blended: he regretted her not being followed, though now all doubts of her seduction by Edwin were at an end. Those
only

only who have felt every joy blasted, every wish frustrated, can form an idea of the distress of mind he laboured under at this moment: his heart died within him; the thoughts of flying to the continent no longer engrossed his attention. Of what value was life to a man, deprived of the wretch's last resource, hope? He revealed to Collet the accident that happened to him, and the consequences he had such reason to apprehend from the effects of his passion.

Collet now turned as pale in his turn. "What!" cried he, "can you then so coolly talk of an event that may bring you to an untimely death? Why, for God's sake, are you here? Why do you not leave the kingdom? But stay; where is the man, do you say? Here, write; write directions: and, Lord, have mercy upon us! what will become of your friends? You say, you have a mother; you are too much in love to think of her, I suppose.—Come, let us go," putting on his hat.

Herbert,

Herbert, whose filial attention had been wholly lost in the despair which seized him on Collet's account of Anna, now, indeed, remembered he had a mother; one, whose life hung upon his welfare; and a sister, who doted on him: he therefore gratefully accepted of Collet's offer to accompany him to town to visit the man, and to render him any farther service the exigency of the case required.

When they reached the Borough, Collet alighted, and Herbert went on to the London Coffee-house, as a place less likely for him to be known in, in case of the worst, than any one in the vicinity of St. James's. When Collet arrived at the grocer's, he enquired for Mr. Herbert, and was most agreeably surpris'd to hear he was gone from thence: having sent for his lawyer, and removed himself to the Fleet, his next inquiries were of Mrs. Nichols and her brother.

"Brother!" answered the woman of the house, "the fellow she calls so is bad enough, I believe, and she suffers enough for
"him;

“ him ; but I assure you, Sir, though I let
“ lodgings, if I had known she was not
“ Mr. Herbert’s wife, she should not have
“ set her foot here : it was not the act of a
“ gentleman to bring such a creature to
“ an honest house, when he had so good a
“ lady and such sweet children.—Poor dear
“ gentlewoman, ’twould have melted a
“ heart of stone to have seen her and her
“ daughter, lamenting over each other,
“ and falling on their knees to pray that
“ the son might get out of the kingdom ;
“ for the Doctor says, the man will cer-
“ tainly die.”

Collet could bear to hear no more : he inquired where the surgeon lived ; and having the direction, waited on him immediately. He happened luckily not only to be a skilful, humane man, but one who had walked the hospitals with Collet, and was an old acquaintance.—He gave him every light into the man’s situation in his power, and concluded by saying, if it were possible to keep the woman from him, he should hope to lower the fever ; and
in

In that case, the thigh being reduced, and the bone set, he might recover; but though he had told her the evil consequences which would certainly follow her obstinately disturbing him with her turbulent grief, he had not been able to prevail on her to leave him.

At Collet's desire they went there, and being shewn into a room adjoining that where the patient lay, they heard Nichols in a loud key, between crying and scolding, vowing revenge against the murderer of her dear Jack.

She was informed the Doctor wanted to speak with her: when she made her appearance, he begged her to think on the advice he had given her; and, if the life of the sick person was really dear to her, to permit him to be quiet.

Collet was a very good surgeon, apothecary, and man-midwife: he was more; he knew a little smattering of the law, which he had picked up in his youth at the house of an uncle who was of that profession.

The

The landlady entering, with very little ceremony, at this moment, to demand her rent, and at the same time to require security for what might become farther due before the man would be fit to remove if he recovered, Collet asked who had taken the lodgings? "Mr. Herbert," was the answer. — "This lady, then, can have no right here," said he; "I will pay what may be due from that gentleman; you must yourself determine whether, when I discharge the apartment, you will accept this lady for your tenant."

"Not for the world," answered the woman; "the best ladies, whose misfortune it is to be obliged to live in the rules, occupy my apartments: I have no occasion to take in cast-off mistresses."

Nichols, whose cunning equalled her wickedness, for the first time now thought of the unthrifty game she was playing.

Mrs. Emmerson, indeed, knew well enough, from the beginning, the character of Nichols; but while her lodgers paid beforehand, and spent with profuseness, money, which,

which, if properly applied, would go far towards satisfying their creditors, it was her way to be the most servile and fawning of creatures : but when it was no longer in their power to feed her unbounded avarice, no one knew the art of changing sooner, or with so little ceremony.

Mrs. Herbert, the lawful wife, with her daughter, whose appearance, in their undress, was elegant and genteel, and in a carriage, (one of Mr. Edwin's) which was splendid, were objects of infinitely more consequence to her, than Nichols, now abandoned by her keeper, although she had maintained, at a most extravagant rate, all the family, from the time they had been in the lodgings. This the wretched woman felt ; and though she was not so destitute of the means to insure respect, as her landlady supposed, the idea of being debarred from seeing her quondam brother brought her to an humble sense of her situation: she promised, if she was suffered to continue there till Tyrrel could be safely removed, she

would not enter his room without their leave.

On this, Mrs. Emmerson was promised payment of every expence that should be incurred; and the two surgeons then visited the patient.

They found him with every symptom of an inflammatory fever, restless, and apparently in great agony, yet sensible. He asked, with eagerness, if there were any hopes of his recovery? Mr. Walker told him, and it was confirmed by Collet, that all depended on his being kept quiet.

After a little pause, "Then," said he, "gentlemen, you admit it to be doubtful; " and that is enough to give me warning " that I shall soon be called upon, to answer, at the bar of heaven, for the sins of " my past life: while I have my senses, " then, let me make all the atonement *now* " in my power, for the injury I have " done the gentleman, who, if I defer it, " and die, must suffer for an act to which " I provoked him."

Mr.

Mr. Walker would have advised him to compose himself for the present, alledging the certainty there was of the least agitation increasing the fever: but Collet, who thought if he expired as soon as his confession was ended, it was of far less import, than keeping one moment in suspense the safety of such a man as Charles Herbert, ran out of the room, and in a second returned with pen, ink, and paper, and advising him to encourage those repentant thoughts, sat down with great gravity to take his confession.

Nichols, too guilty not to be alarmed at Collet's conduct, rushed fiercely in, demanding what they were at? Her presence visibly disordered the sick man; he begged she might be sent out of the room, and Collet seizing her, not in the most gentle manner, forced her into an adjoining apartment, locked her in, telling her, in a determined voice, if she attempted to interrupt them again, she should instantly be turned out of the house. He returned then to his office, and took down the following particulars,

given at broken intervals of pain by the patient:

“ James Tyrrel voluntarily confesses,
“ he lived fellow-servant with Eliazabeth
“ Nichols, by whom he had a child, be-
“ fore she waited on Mrs. Herbert, on
“ which account he absconded, and en-
“ tered on board a man of war; that find-
“ ing Mr. Herbert had taken Nichols into
“ keeping, and that he was a man of inte-
“ rest, he applied to his old friend, who
“ was rejoiced to see him, and introduced
“ him to Mr. Herbert as her half-brother,
“ and prevailed on him to get him a gun-
“ ner’s warrant; that they renewed their
“ connection whenever he could leave the
“ ship, which having done once too often,
“ he was broken; since which they had mu-
“ tually agreed to make up a sum of money,
“ and elope from Mr. Herbert; that they
“ had succeeded so far as to realize two
“ thousand pounds, and the next morning
“ (now they had gotten all there was to be
“ had) was fixed for their departure, when
“ the accident happened which is like to
“ end



“ end in this criminal’s death: but the
 “ said James Tyrrel solemnly declares, in
 “ the presence of Josiah Walker and Je-
 “ remiah Collet, that he first assaulted Mr.
 “ Herbert, without any provocation what-
 “ ever; and he is sure that gentleman was
 “ wholly innocent of any designs against
 “ his life.”

With this paper, as soon as signed and witnessed, which was done in the presence of Emmerfon and his wife, who were summoned for the occasion, Collet was in such a hurry to get away, that he forgot to liberate the lady, or to get into a coach he had ordered to be called, but ran away to the London coffee-house, where he found Mr. Herbert, with a packet of letters before him, sealed and directed, and himself ready to set out.

Collet congratulated him on the good news he had brought, and shewing him the confession of Tyrrel, now averred there was no occasion for him to leave his friends and country.

It is not to be doubted but Herbert was glad to find the black and abhorred crime of premeditated murder was not attributed to him ; but an acquittal of this, and every other error, could not give peace to his bosom : there the seducing form of Anna for ever dwelt. — Reason nor philosophy could reconcile him to her loss, which every moment afflicted him beyond the last. — His heart sunk when he reflected on her present situation ; he had considered and reconsidered how he could exist, breathing the same air with her, for ever lost to him. — Having concluded it impossible, he resolved to leave the kingdom, and, when on the continent, to write to his friends for leave to continue some time abroad previous to his entering the Temple.

Collet's intelligence, therefore, had not the effect he expected. Herbert found his mother had been at Emmerson's, and that she concluded him gone. The reason he chose to assign for parting was, he thought, best avoided ; and having given it his friend,

friend, and engaged his correspondence, he sent for a chaise, and set off for Dover.

Collet, from the time he had left home, till the present moment, had never bestowed a thought on Layton; but the instant he had done the last friendly office for Herbert, and had seen him from the door, it occurred to him, that he had three women, from each of whom he was in hourly expectation of a summons, two men in fevers, and a boy with a broken leg, every one of whom he ought to have visited that evening, and that he had left home without the least intimation of where he was going, or when he should return: he had also promised Charles to wait on Mrs. Herbert in the morning, and inform her of all that had passed at Emmerson's, but without hinting that he had seen her son, or on what occasion: immediately then throwing himself into a post-chaise, he returned to Layton.

C H A P T E R LVII.

Lady's Dressing-Room.

IT was broad day when the Doctor reached his own house, which was in no small confusion, on account of his absence. Finding he had not been particularly wanted, he retired extremely fatigued, and enjoyed the heavenly repose a sense of having acted under that Divine Command of loving our neighbours as ourselves, and doing unto all men as we would they should do unto us, insures.

The next morning Mrs. Wellers, among the rest of his friends, came to inquire by what sudden power Collet had vanished; her, and her only, he made acquainted with the whole affair; shewed her the letters he promised to deliver, and which he intended going to town to do, as soon as he had been round to visit his patients.

The

The one directed to Mrs. Herbert, in Grosvenor-square, caught her eye; she told him she had two days ago been twice there, and was assured all the family had left town. But as I have not informed my reader of the success of that lady's inquiries after my heroine's character, I must account for some part of her behaviour, by doing it now.

She went, her son escorting her to Sir William Edwin's, where, expressing much disappointment at hearing they had left town, the servant told her, young Mr. Edwin lived in Portman-square. They drove there—the ladies were not stirring.—They asked what time they would be visible? About two o'clock.—At two they returned, and were ushered, through a suit of magnificent rooms, into one in which sat Mrs. Edwin and Cecilia, attended by Frajan, who was now equally the favourite of both sisters.

Mrs. Wellers' curiosity was excited about those young ladies, more from the reports of others, than any thing she had

heard from Anna ; her grateful remembrance of the former kindness of that family had sealed her lips, respecting any ill qualities Miss Edwin might be subject to. As to Mrs. Edwin, she was, in a manner, a stranger to her ; but such very fine ladies could not but be famous—they led the mode—the Edwin cap, hat, shoe, and fash, were universally worn.

They were sitting on white satin Ottomans, a superb breakfast equipage before them ; the room breathed perfumes ; it was decorated with the choicest and most beautiful flowers in the finest china vases ; the toilette magnificently set out with silver fillagree boxes ; and the assemblage of every elegance luxury could invent, or money purchase, were here in the height of profusion.

Mrs. Edwin's dress was a beautiful spotted gauze chemise, lined with pale pink persian ; Cecilia's the same, with the difference of a lilach lining.

But peace dwelt not on the brow of the fair mistress of this elegant mansion ; a fretful

ful fullness clouded her features ; not in the possession of her husband's affections, she despised the ridiculous advice of her mother-in-law, and scorned to court, where her vanity told her she ought to be courted : her house was a continual scene of dissipation ; yet there she was restless and dissatisfied. Her delicate constitution began to suffer from the fatigue of following each fashionable resort, in search of happiness ; and this morning her eyes were sunk languidly in that head, which still violently ached, from the late hours she had kept the preceding evening.

Miss Edwin was more gay ; she had attracted the notice of a man of fashion and quality, who had looked and swore enough to gratify any coquette alive.

Mrs. Wellers, being received with great politeness and seated, opened her business ; it was (Lady Edwin not being in town) to inquire the character of a young person who lived with her as companion, a Miss Mansel.

Mrs. Edwin, indisposed and out of spirits before, appeared greatly affected at the name, and presently burst into tears. The sadness of her appearance, amidst so many sources of pleasure, had sensibly stricken Mrs. Wellers the moment she came in; and to find the cause originated with her favourite, not a little shocked her.

Miss Edwin immediately answered her inquiries, in a manner the reader will expect. Frajan was ready, not only to confirm, but invent; and Mrs. Wellers, who, appearing a very good sort of a woman, was told, in confidence, they had every reason to suspect Mr. Edwin now actually kept the object of her inquiry.

Mrs. Edwin's tears flowed afresh at this part of the story; and Mrs. Wellers, shocked, mortified, and disappointed, took her leave.

When they were in the carriage, as she began to express her distress at what had happened, Mr. Wellers, without the least change of countenance, declared his resolution of never taking any one into his house
without

without a good character, be their appearance ever so specious.

As they drove on, she ruminated on what had passed, and all she had heard; but when she came to compare the actions she had been told of, with the ingenuous look, the elegant manners, and refined sentiments of Anna, such a flagrant contradiction she was astonished at; and recollecting how inconsistent with their account of her, had been the behaviour she was accidentally witness to when Edwin visited her, her partiality returned, and rendered Miss Edwin's character of Anna incredible: she once more went to Grosvenor-square, in order to get directions to write to Lady Cecilia, and resolved to avoid coming to a final eclaircissement with Anna till she heard from her.

Again she questioned the servants very closely about any of the family's being in town, and again she was as stoutly answered in the negative; so that the letter to Mrs. Herbert there, might well surprise her; though the elopement of our heroine, with
the

the absence of Mr. Edwin from home, and the positive asseverations that he was in the village, left it but too probable all she had heard was true, which was agreed to by Collet, whose attachment to Herbert was evinced by the concern he felt. Strolling home, she called at Dalton's, merely by way of hearing the chat of the day. Mrs. Dalton was crying; the disappointment of her hopes, and the uncertainty of what was become of Anna, extremely affected her; and the cautious husband not being in the way to prevent her, she told Mrs. Wellers the whole story of Lord Sutton's love for Anna, and the great offers he had made her.

Mrs. Wellers was dumb with astonishment—she could not believe it. The letter he had sent Anna she had left carelessly on the table, where Mrs. Dalton had found it: it was produced as evidence of the truth of her assertion.

“ Good God !” exclaimed Mrs. Wellers,
“ what wickedness lurks under this mystery !
“ Can it be—can a nobleman wish to marry ?
can.

“ can he court, in an honourable way, a
“ young person he has himself known to
“ be an impostor, a thief?”

“ Who a thief, Madam?” answered Mrs. Dalton, colouring; “ not Anna, nobody can
“ accuse her, I am sure, of such an act; I
“ will pledge my life for her principles in
“ every respect: very bad things have been
“ said of her in this wicked village; but she
“ is as innocent, Madam, as a new-born
“ infant, wherever she is.”

“ Will you permit me, Mrs. Dalton, to
“ take this letter with me? It will help to
“ clear Miss Mansel, if she is innocent, of
“ many a vile imputation.” Mrs. Dalton
agreed to it, and Mrs. Wellers took it home
with her.

In the greatest astonishment she read it
over and over; and, in turning it, found the
rough draught of Anna’s answer: spite of
her elopement, spite of the words and ho-
nour of two ladies of the ton, and a French
waiting-woman, Mrs. Wellers gave way to
a benevolent joy. Such a proof of the in-
nocence

nocence of her dear girl was, she said, the strongest cordial to her spirits.

She sent for Bently—he was gone to London, and had not been at home all night. Collet was next acquainted with this extraordinary circumstance—he took a copy to send to Charles, and the original to shew Mrs. Herbert, with which he set off to town; first going to the Borough, where he heard that Nichols, finding she was discovered, had decamped very early that morning, and Tyrrel was in a fair way of recovery.

C H A P. LVIII.

The Fond Mother.

FROM the Borough Mr. Collet went to Grosvenor-square.—Mrs. Herbert was at first denied; but on his saying he brought letters from her son, he was instantly admitted.

mitted. Here he found a gentleman, crying with the distracted mother and daughter.

Mrs. Herbert was leaning back in an arm chair, the picture of silent woe, the big tear, in speechless agony, rolling down her pale cheek ; while Patty, whose face rested on her folding arms, as she sat at the table, audibly sobbed.

The gentleman, who appeared extremely affected, arose the instant Collet entered :—
“ We fear, Sir, to ask you the news : — is
“ the villain yet living ?—Is Mr. Herbert
“ safe ?”

“ Oh !” cried the fond mother, who could now speak : “ Say it, say but my son, the
“ pride of my life, the darling of my soul,
“ is safe, out of the reach of that malignant
“ fate he inherits from his mother ; and,
“ while I live, I will revere you as my good
“ angel.”—Miss Herbert involuntarily advanced, and, catching hold of his hand, burst into a fresh flood of tears. Collet was too much affected to answer : he felt for the letters, and, in his hurry to deliver the one
he

he received from her son for her, he gave into the hand of the gentleman the one he had written to send to Herbert, with copies of Lord Sutton's letter and Anna's answer, which he had not yet sealed, reserving it to tell him of his journey to Grosvenor-square.

Mrs. Herbert waited trembling to know the contents, and Patty eagerly looked over his shoulder; but the surprize of each was equal, on finding it addressed to Charles, and full of Anna! Patty coloured;—the gentleman turned pale.—

“ Ah!” cried Mrs. Herbert, “ why are you so much affected?—Tell, tell me the worst, that if my son must die, I may resign to my own fate.”—He begged her not to be alarmed; and, turning to Collet,—“ You have, I believe, Sir,” said he, “ made some mistake in this letter,” returning it.

“ Oh, Cot so! — so I have,” answered the Doctor, colouring, “ this is Mrs. Herbert's,” giving the right, and one to Miss Herbert.

“ But where, where is he, Sir?”—

—“ In France by this time.—”

“ God

“ God be praised,” said Mrs. Herbert, falling on her knees; “ spare, spare and
“ bless him, O merciful God ; once more
“ let me fold him in safety and honour to
“ my bosom, and dispose of the miserable
“ remnant of my days, as thou seest fit.”

The Doctor was too much affected to assist Wilkinson in lifting her up, who, when she was re-seated, at her request, her own eyes being blinded with tears, read Mr. Herbert's letter, which was as follows :

“ When I parted from the best of mothers, this morning, how little did I foresee the possibility of any event which could
“ turn the desired presence of her son into
“ so dreadful an aggravation of her distress !
“ Arm your heart, my beloved, my ever-honoured mother, with that firm confidence in heaven, you have all your life,
“ both by precept and example, taught
“ your children. Fear not but I am too
“ sensible of the very few comforts left
“ you, not to take the greatest care of my
“ own preservation : I am sure I am safe ;
“ the

“ the virtues of my mother are my shield
“ and defence.

“ Forgive, dearest Madam, the unjusti-
“ fiable rashness that has (though on my
“ part perfectly undesigned) in all pro-
“ bability robbed a fellow-creature of his
“ existence: I know your prayers will be
“ incessantly offered for me; and, I trust,
“ should the *worst* happen, the imputation
“ of murder will not rest on *your* son.—My
“ unhappy father! what shall I say of him?
“ Would to God he could see his error, all
“ might yet be well.—Be happy; my ever-
“ loved mother; grieve not, I implore
“ you; this misfortune will be too heavy
“ for me, if you bear it not with that firm-
“ ness of mind which has hitherto sup-
“ ported you. As soon as I reach the
“ continent I will write to Sir William,
“ for his permission to finish my studies
“ abroad; and, at every possible oppor-
“ tunity, gratify my own feelings, in writ-
“ ting to you.—Let me not forget what I
“ owe to the bearer, Mr. Collet, who, in
“ every sense of the epithet, has been the
warm.

“ warm, disinterested friend of, dearest

“ Madam,

“ Your dutiful

“ and affectionate son,

“ CHARLES HERBERT.”

This letter, which, wet with maternal tears, was put in Mrs. Herbert's bosom, gave a new turn to the countenances of all present.—Patty said, her brother, her dear brother, had written charmingly to her, but it was not just now necessary her mama should see his letter; she was already too much affected:—all acknowledged Collet's kindness; but when he came to Tyrrel's confession, their joy and gratitude were ungovernable.—Patty declared she would go to her papa that night: but this Mrs. Herbert opposed, as they knew not how he might be affected at the discovery; he may perhaps choose, said she, to have as few witnesses as possible of his feelings. Mr. Wilkinson has business with him; if Mr. Collet will trouble himself to go with him, he will, or will not, tell all that has
past

past in the Borough, as he judges best, from the disposition in which they find him.

Collet again forgot his patients and the village, but begged for a dish of tea. The ladies apologized for their neglect; and while they were taking it, he asked Mrs. Herbert, how she had heard of the disagreeable accident? She immediately handed him this note:

“ Deserving, unhappy woman, thy curses
“ on me cannot increase my misery or
“ despair; nor can the consciousness of thy
“ own virtues give thee comfort adequate
“ to thy sorrows. Our son, that dear,
“ faultless youth, irritated by the vices of
“ his father, has forfeited his life to the
“ laws of his country. He has escaped
“ for the present. Let thy prayers be
“ offered to the God thou hast served, that
“ he may be so fortunate as to get out of
“ the reach of his pursuers:—thine may
“ avail—*mine cannot.*

C. H.”

“ Oh!” said Patty, “ if you had seen
“ us at the receipt of that shocking note!
but

“ but, thank God, (smiling through her
“ tears) it is over; it was brought us at my
“ cousin’s—we went directly in his chariot
“ to the Borough—he was not at home, or
“ I am sure he would have gone with us—
“ and there an ugly woman ran on talking
“ of every thing but what we wanted to
“ know. Papa was gone, and they said the
“ man was dying; but, God be praised, it
“ is over, and we shall never see that shock-
“ ing place again. Only think, Mama,
“ Mrs. Edwin has never sent, nor Miss
“ Edwin!” “Inhuman!” cried Wilkin-
son, with indignation; “but come, Sir, we
“ shall be too late.”

They left the ladies comparatively happy, and found Mr. Herbert surrounded with papers, a settled gloom on his countenance, and unshaved or dressed. When Wilkinson entered, a gleam of satisfaction beamed on his face, but quickly disappeared after the first salutation. Wilkinson said, “an execution had been laid on the works, and that *he* was dispatched by the other partners to know what was to be done.”

Herbert

Herbert was silent.

"They are exceedingly distressed," continued Wilkinson.

"So am I," was the answer. "Have you seen Mrs. Herbert?"

"He had been there."

"Any news of my boy?" They told him he was safe, and Tyrrel recovering. Collet then gave an account of his visit in the Borough, and named Nichols.

"O! d—n her! d—n her!" said he, in an agony.

Wilkinson took occasion now to expatiate on the sufferings, the merits, and the still warm affection, of Mrs. Herbert; and, at the conclusion, Collet produced the paper signed by Tyrrel. At the perusal of this, he shrunk with horror, but said nothing. Wilkinson then asked, "if he would permit Mrs. and Miss Herbert to visit him?"

"No, no!" answered he fiercely; "let them stay till to-morrow; I have affairs to settle, and cannot be interrupted. You, Sir," said he to Collet, "have acted nobly

“ nobly by my son—you must do me the
“ favour to wear this ring,” taking a valuable diamond off his finger. Collet started back—to accept of such a present from an insolvent for business in the course of his profession, would have been considered by him as an act of injustice; and much more, when it meant to pay for his friendship—he found himself hurt at the idea. Mr. Herbert, however, would not be refused; he insisted on his taking it, with a warmth that plainly shewed he thought himself offended by Collet’s declining his offer. He therefore, with great reluctance, at last put it on his finger, secretly resolving, however, it should return to the family.

As Wilkinson found Mr. Herbert in no mood to talk of business, he now proposed going; the leave they took of him was on his side solemn; he embraced Wilkinson affectionately—“ Young man,” said he, “ I
“ have been your friend; if, when I am no
“ more, my family should want one, do
“ not forget it.”

VOL. III. G “ Never,

“Never, Sir,” answered he, “can I forget the many obligations I am under to you—your interest, and that of your family, shall ever be mine; I have no doubt but you will yet,” continued he, smiling, “confer many more favours on me.” This was said as they were parting. Mr. Herbert instantly drew back, and shut the door; and Wilkinson then had the opportunity he longed for of enquiring after the fate of Anna.

Mr. Mansel had been laid up with the gout three months back: his distress at not hearing from her, was unspeakable, although he knew not she had left the Edwins; and Wilkinson was charged with a letter full of remonstrances at her unkindness. His surprise at hearing from Mrs. Herbert that she was gone, and that they were ignorant of her present situation, was, as may be imagined, great, and his anxiety not less. She had been his first, and indeed his only love. While she was single, there was a hope, which he had fondly indulged. The discovery Collet’s mistake had made was at once

once pleasing and painful: he was overjoyed to find, as he then thought, where she was; and not a little hurt to see, by the style of his letter, the Doctor looked on Herbert as her lover. As soon as he could resume the subject of the mistake in the letter which Collet had made, he informed him of his commission from her friend, and requested the favour of Miss Mansel's address.

The Doctor, who had not the art of keeping secrets, in return communicated to him all that had come to his knowledge of Anna. No words can express Wilkinson's astonishment; nor could any power on earth lessen his confidence in the honour of her principles, or the purity of her heart. He heard with indignation the low scandal of the village, and with rage the accusations of theft confirmed by Lord Sutton. He swore to make him prove, or eat his words:—but when he saw the hand-writing of the despicable Peer, his proposal of marriage, and the rough draught of her answers, which proved she was sensible of the injuries he

had offered her, he was with difficulty restrained from going that instant to his house. In the continuation of Collet's history, he learned, to his great grief and mortification, she was now out of the reach of his inquiries ; yet he determined, if possible, to find out her retreat, and to prevail on her to return to Mr. Mansel's.

They were on the point of parting, when who should dash by but Mr. Bently ; he stopped at sight of Collet.—“ Can't find
“ this girl, Doctor ; cannot find her,” (deliberately taking off his hat to cool himself)
“ high nor low : I have walked over all the
“ town, have run my head into all the Ca-
“ ribbee islands and blind allies, as well as
“ high streets ; asked at every house with a
“ bill up—all in vain : nay, I have had
“ that puppy watched—he goes no where
“ but to Parliament-House, gaming-tables,
“ and brothels :—a wise senator ! ha, Doc-
“ tor !—but I won't go home until I do.
“ And what do you think I'll do next ?
“ Why I'll advertise her, with a handsome
“ reward.” And away walked Bently.
“ That,”

“That,” said Collet, “is another of your friend’s admirers.” Wilkinson, curious to know more of a being who appeared quite a character, would have detained the Doctor longer; but again recollection was the friend of his patients, and directly he took the road to Layton.

Wilkinson returned to Bond-street; where, having recounted the particulars that had passed with Mr. Herbert, it was agreed they should go next day to the Fleet, and endeavour to prevail on him to write to Sir William, who, they made no doubt, would then settle his affairs. “And if,” said Mrs. Herbert, “at last he will be content at home, we will give up the house at Bath, and be happy at Llandore.”

At supper, he repeated to Mrs. Herbert what he had heard of Anna, great part of which she knew:—but when he came to Sutton’s honourable addresses, it required all her confidence in his veracity to induce her to give it credit. Patty, on her part, loved our heroine with an affection founded on the solid basis of esteem: she could

easily credit every other circumstance that spoke to the honour of her friend ; but this affair of Sutton's was almost incredible even to her.—Indeed they both recollected his passion for Cecilia had not been lately heard of ; but still, for a man of rank to join with so poor an implement in debasing the character of a woman one moment, and the next offer her his name and fortune, were actions which, in their idea, exceeded probability. Wilkinson, in the honest warmth of his soul, avowed his intention of hunting the vile calumny to the bottom that could brand a young creature, who was the sweetest emblem of virtue, with the practice of vice. No rank, age, or sex, he swore, should escape his inquiries, nor the dearest considerations on earth prevent his exposing, and, as far as was in his power, punishing the perpetrators of so inhuman an act. Mrs. Herbert, however, intreated him to be tender, for her sake, of the Edwins.

CHAP. LIX.

An Affignation.

MRS. Herbert, who had not closed her eyes from the instant the danger of her darling son had reached her, retired, overcome with fatigue, before nine o'clock; and Wilkinson, not choosing himself to lose any time in town, as the company's affairs were so deranged, set out to visit some persons who had been very kind to him in his infancy, and for whom he had a great affection. They were people in rather low circumstances, whose regard had been of the utmost advantage to his early years, and to whom he had allowed something towards their maintenance; from the time he had begun to receive the pay of his own labour, and for the last two years, they experienced the sweets of plenty, having received, by his order, one guinea per week.

Crossing Oxford-road, two ladies passed him very quick ; and getting into a hackney coach, it was ordered, by a voice he was sure he knew, to drive to the Park. The lateness of the hour, and their being without attendants, rather staggered him ; yet, if ever he saw Miss Edwin, or heard her speak, it was her. A sudden impulse of curiosity tempted him to follow the coach, which, notwithstanding being perpetually bid to drive on, went a very slow pace : they alighted at Spring-Gardens, and the moon shining bright, he saw he was not mistaken ; they were hardly entered the Park, when they were joined by two gentlemen, and presently the ladies were divided, both couples appearing perfectly at ease with each other :

He could not possibly be with both parties ; he therefore stuck to Cecilia, whom he followed at a distance, and found the walk was to be the end of the present meeting ; for in half an hour, the lady who had separated from them, called to the other to go : they parted with the gentlemen where
they

they met, the salutations of both being in French, which Wilkinson did not understand. He could therefore make nothing out from what little he heard of their conversation; but certain of their persons, and Anna in his head, he thought as this was, perhaps, the only time he might have to speak to Miss Edwin, he would not let it escape: there was a mystery, an indecorum, in the interview he had been witness to, that gave him a courage he would, on any other occasion, have wanted in addressing Miss Edwin; but respect is incompatible with the discovery of a lady's intrigue.

On pretence, therefore, of assisting them to the coach, he affected to recognize Cecilia.—Never was meeting with an old country acquaintance so *mal-à-propos*.—Fain would she have denied herself, and finding that impossible, laughed at their being out alone so late. As a frolick, Wilkinson joined in their good humour, and jumped into the coach with them, protesting that his respect for her family would

not suffer him to leave them unguarded at that late hour. Indeed he had other motives—he had an ardent wish to be admitted to half an hour's conversation with Miss Edwin; which, now that Fortune had so particularly favoured him, by meeting her in such a situation, at such an hour, he hoped she would not refuse.

A coquette is a being whose passion for admiration increases with being fed; she is so well with herself, that if a man puts on a specious countenance in her presence, she sets him down as her own, and attributes the solemnity of his aspect to the passion she has inspired. Let him be gay, she exerts all her artifice and cunning to rob him of the free enjoyment of his own spirits.—She never doubts his professions, because it is at first more generally her interest to appear the dupe of them. Her whole business with mankind is to ensnare and deceive; and knowing the insignificance of her own character, putting flirtation out of the question, forms no expectation of being approached by the male sex on
any

any other subject but love and admiration, or in any other style but that of gallantry.

Miss Edwin perfectly recollected Wilkinson; but not sensible of any kind of business he could have with her, and her imagination ever on the wing for new conquest, she immediately concluded he was a victim to charms she believed irresistible. True, he was a low country fellow, a mere idiot; nevertheless if she could but get out of this scrape, his stupidity might amuse, and his oddity divert her. It would be pleasant to rob him of his peace, and delightful, by a shew of happiness, to lull him into misery. With this humane intention, she suffered him to press her hand; nor attempted to repulse the freedom of his address with any of her usual *bataure*.

Her companion had not yet once broken silence, but sat trembling, in expectation of the event; while Cecilia, with an easy familiarity, entered into chat with the intruder; not once apprehending but she could frown him into obedience whenever it was convenient to dismiss him. She was

mistaken; the low fellow was as invulnerable to her smiles as unawed by her frowns, when it was intimated the ladies could now dispense with his attendance. Good humour, gravity, scorn, anger, nor serious remonstrances, had any effect on the vulgar creature!

He still persisted in seeing her home; and when there, having half an hour's audience.—At last, “they were not going home.”—“No! for heaven’s sake, where then!”—“It could be nothing to him—” “It was very unlike a gentleman to be so troublesome.”—“He thought differently: when he had the honour of seeing Lady Edwin, which would be in the course of a month, and told her *when* and *where* he had met her daughter, she, he was sure, would never thank him for leaving her so exposed to insult.”—“Well then,” cried Cecilia, peevishly, “we had some business at Madam Chamberaud’s, in St. James’s-street, and the evening being fine, we were tempted to stroll out:—our carriage will attend us there.”

The

The falsehood of this story was not calculated to inspire Wilkinson with much respect for his fair companions; however, Cecilia promising solemnly to be at home to him at eleven next morning, he alighted; and keeping the carriage in view, saw them get out at the milliner's, where, soon after, an elegant *vis-à-vis* drew up, and the ladies having put off their calashes, got into it: of this carriage, as they drove very fast, he soon lost sight.

This incident made it too late to visit his friend in the city, and he returned to Grosvenor-square, where he was invited to take his bed.

C H A P T E R LX.

The Suicide.

WILKINSON, on his rising next morning, found the ladies ready dressed, and impatient to be gone.

“ I

“ I know not the reason,” said Mrs. Herbert, “ but instead of the quiet repose “ I expected after the blessed news of yesterday, which I hoped would have given “ me, what I have long been deprived of, “ a good night’s rest, I have been disturbed “ by the most horrid dreams, and waked in “ terrors not to be expressed.—I fear that “ wretch, Tyrrel, is dead.”

Wilkinson and Miss Herbert did all they could to dispel those apprehensions, which, increasing every moment, he proposed going round by the Borough, and calling at the grocer’s before they went to Mr. Herbert’s: just as their route was settled, Mr. Edwin was announced. That gentleman was a stranger in his own house, and his own family were the last people he thought of conversing with. His clothes were kept, and his servants resided there; but except to change them, or sleep off the intemperance of a frolicksome night, it was the last place he was likely to be seen at. Sometimes, but very rarely, he did Mrs. Edwin the honour of eating a silent dinner with her;

her ; and once or twice, being pressed to be of her party in the evening, expressed his extreme mortification and regret that an engagement prevented his having that honour : since which, his happy wife had not troubled him or herself any more on the subject. He had heard, with a *sang-froid* peculiar to the character of a modern fine gentleman, the situation of Mr. Herbert. — Anna was still the object of his wishes ; but his passions were now rather more interested in the division of a pack of cards, and the chance of the dice, than on all that woman could bestow. The obtaining her was attended with such trouble, which he hated, and so much time, of which he had not a moment to spare, that except now and then, when a very bad run at play, and the effects of constant dissipation and immorality, in his course of life, brought something like recollection across him, (which had been the case the day she quitted Layton) he seldom bestowed a thought on her.

But

But he could not so far entirely surmount every prejudice of his juvenile years, as to hear of the misfortunes of Charles with the same indifference. He had slept at home the last morning; and waking earlier than common, with the head-ach, his servant was summoned with tea, which, while he was taking, without the least relish, merely to dispel the fumes of Champaign, Bates mentioned the story of the murder, Charles's flight, and Mrs. Herbert's distraction, with the usual additions and aggravations a tale generally meets in repeating.

He immediately threw off the languor to which he had devoted the morning, and, dressing with the greatest expedition, went to Grosvenor-square, where he was received with a gratitude and affection, that gave him the first sensible pleasure he had for some months experienced, except the four honours at a game at whist, or a lucky cast of the dice; which, however, to do him justice, he was seldom so happy as to encounter.

He

He took them in his carriage to the Borough ; and, during the ride, the warmth with which he espoused the cause of her son, made Mrs. Herbert and Patty eloquent in his praise.

Under the thick veil, which his unjustifiable pursuits spread over the mind of Edwin, there yet existed some of the principles of humanity, honour, and generosity. The happiness he saw he imparted, exhilarated his own spirits; and the consciousness of being *now* on a laudable pursuit, relieved him from the *ennui* which, of late, never left him but at the gaming-table, or a still worse place.

They found Mrs. Herbert had been a false prophetess; for Tyrrel was better. He then accompanied them to the Fleet, Edwin promising every good office in his power for Mr. Herbert.

Mrs. Herbert, as I have informed my reader, had long lived on terms of the most miserable distrust of a husband she tenderly and passionately loved.—Still he offended, and still he was forgiven ; till the consequence

quence of his indelicate connections had injured her health.—From that period she declined his bed; and his conduct since had been so little adapted to heal the shock her virtuous love for him had received, that she had gradually felt herself superior to the man who was continually wounding her pride and affection. Time had blunted the edge of those injuries which had at first cut her to the soul; and she had long ceased to think on his course of living with any other uneasiness than what a good and generous heart ever feels for the internal peace of those they are connected with, and her fear for the future welfare of her family inspired.—His affairs were secrets to her, but when her interest was wanting with her brother, which he cheerfully exerted, as they were always glossed over by some plausible pretext or other:—the hopes, therefore, of his reformation, gave her pleasure; but the rapture of regaining his heart was out of her thoughts: all her personal love for him was transferred to her children; but duty and religion taught her to rejoice

joice in his abandoning his errors, and induced her to adopt every mode of conduct towards him that could render the new path of honour delightful.

Patty loved her father; and now that she could honour as well as love him, she should, she said, be the happiest girl on earth.

Wilkinson had reason, in point of interest as well as friendship, to wish it; and Edwin was resolved to relieve his uncle from his distress.—With these dispositions, they approached the prison. When the coach drew up, the ceremony of unblocking the gates, struck Mrs. Herbert with a secret horror, and Patty gasped for breath. Wilkinson, observing how they were affected, proposed their staying in the coach, while he went up to apprise Mr. Herbert of their visit.

Edwin would have accompanied him; but Miss Herbert, frightened at the looks of the place, and the strange countenances she saw passing to and fro, caught hold of him, and begged him not to leave them.

Several

Several people were crowded round the door, and more were gathering. The elegant carriage which stood so near, was an object of curiosity.—The ladies pulled up the blinds next the door:—they knew not but the place was accustomed to be so thronged.

Wilkinson's stay being protracted beyond their ideas of any probable cause, Mr. Edwin offered to seek him. Still Patty clung to him in terror; and Mrs. Herbert, again giving way to the forebodings of her affrightened imagination, waited in pale and dreadful suspense. The crowd increasing to quite a mob, with serious and earnest faces, Edwin begged them to suffer him to leave them a few moments:—he could form no idea of what detained their friend—but it was proper to enquire;—some accident might have happened to him;—therefore he was permitted to go, and the blind again drawn up.

In a moment, however, he returned with Wilkinson.

“ Oh,

“ Oh, what has happened ! what dreadful news have you to impart ? ” cried Mrs. Herbert, in agony, at sight of the terrified countenances of the two gentlemen ; and finding the coach turning from the prison, “ For the love of heaven, Sir,” said Patty, “ tell us the worst. Is my papa dead ? Why do we leave this horrid place without seeing him ! ”

“ Stop the coach, Sir,” said Mrs. Herbert, “ I insist on it ; I will know the worst before I leave this spot.”

Wilkinson still sat in speechless terror :—Edwin, hardly able to articulate, begged them to be pacified, and let the carriage drive on.

“ Ah no,” said Mrs. Herbert, “ I came to visit and administer consolation to my penitent husband. I will not return till I am sure he is out of the reach of my assistance, or till (which God forbid) I know he has returned to his errors, and refuses it.”

Finding it impossible to persuade her to return in uncertainty, the carriage stopped.

“ Why

"Why don't you speak, Mr. Wilkinson?" said she.

The tears which now flowed from his manly eyes gave him the power of utterance—he begged they would not ask what would shock them to hear.—Mr. Herbert was really out of the reach of all assistance.

"What, is he dead then?" asked Mrs. Herbert, in a voice of anguish.

"Not dead—but past every kind of help."

"Not dead! and shall I then turn my back on the father of my children while he has life? Open the door—I can at least receive his last breath."

It was in vain to oppose her.—She pushed on, followed by her daughter, through the crowd, who, finding she was wife to the unhappy man, in respectful pity, let her pass. Wilkinson, with difficulty, got before her: she followed up the stone stairs to the door of the apartment to which he led.

There, on a wretched bed, though the best in the prison, lay Mr. Herbert; his eyes

eyes half closed, his jaw fallen, and in the last pangs of death. Several good-looking men, and one woman, were standing near the bed:—the curtains were open to admit the air—a silent horror seemed to reign in the minds of the spectators, who had been offering their unavailing assistance.

“ Oh! Herbert, Herbert!” (said the distressed wife, sinking on her knees by the bed-side; while Patty, not able to give a second look at the horrid spectacle before her, hid her face at the feet) “ is it thus I
“ see thee? — Are these the comforts I
“ fondly promised myself from thy re-
“ formation?—Charles! Dear Charles!—
“ Dost thou not know me?” (looking on him for some moments, to see if he observed her.)

“ What is his disorder? Can nothing be
“ done for him, Mr. Wilkinson, Cousin
“ Edwin? Gentlemen, are you of the fa-
“ culty? Can you do nothing for him?”

A sudden alteration in the heavy breath of the dying man calling all their attention, at this instant they gathered round him.

him. A gleam of sense had re-animated his last moment; his eyes were lifted up to the face of his injured wife.—While her tears were in big drops wetting his face as she hung over him, he fetched a deep sigh, and expired.

Mrs. Herbert, fainting in the arms of Edwin; and her daughter, unable to move from the spot where she at first had sunk, were objects that affected all present.—They were carried out of the scene of death into an apartment belonging to the keeper of the prison, and attended by the gentlemen of the faculty, who had been vainly called in to the dying man.

As soon as, by the humane efforts of the people about her, Mrs. Herbert recovered, she begged to know the particulars of the sad scene they had been witness to.—In this, however, Mr. Edwin and Wilkinson positively refused to gratify her. — Ignorance, indeed, of his last act of violence, was far more eligible than to be indulged in her request; and the reluctance every body expressed of entering into particulars, too fatally

tally confirming her most dreadful apprehensions, she was prevailed on to return with Mr. Edwin, leaving to Wilkinson every care about the body.

Miss Herbert was so very mild in her own temper and disposition, and so little acquainted with the effects of desperation in others, she had no suspicion Mr. Herbert's death was attended with any other uncommon circumstances than its suddenness; and in this happy ignorance her friends wisely let her continue. She sincerely lamented her father, and grieved incessantly she had not seen him, to receive his last blessing before he had lost his senses.

Mr. Edwin gave them the strongest invitation to go to Portman-square; but Mrs. Herbert knew too well the unfeeling disposition of the ladies there, to accept it: he therefore insisted on being her banker, and promising to save her the painful task of writing to Sir William, he left them.

In his way from them to Portman-square, the awful scene of the morning recurred to Mr. Edwin's recollection;—the dreadful

finale of a man, whose life had been devoted to the same guilty pleasures he was himself a slave to, could not but shock him exceedingly. He had an engagement for that day at the house of a famous courtesan in high life, where he was to have had the honour of being in company with some of the first young men of the age, in point both of birth and talents; no disgrace following to either from the character of their hostess; who, added to her beauty, was mistress of every accomplishment, and every art to murder time and banish reflexion:---but she was not now present; and her empire over the senses not being quite so strong in absence, as when the eyes were fascinated with her charms, he formed a resolution of staying at home the whole day; not doubting but on an occasion so solemn Mrs. Edwin would shut her doors.

When his servant attended him, his first question was after his lady and sister.

The man stared;---so unusual was the least desire in either of this worthy couple to meet, that he doubted his senses: however,

ever, the uncommon gravity of his master convinced him he was in earnest.

“ They were out.”

“ Did any company dine there ?” Frajan was asked.

“ O yes ; Count Maxwell and Col. Mendez.”

“ Who the devil are they !”

“ The gentlemen that dine here every day.”

Mr. Edwin now stared in his turn : but feeling more hurt and astonished than he chose to shew, only desired to know when his lady returned—and then performed his promise to Mrs. Herbert, of writing to his father all that had come to his knowledge concerning the death of Mr. Herbert.

Mr. Wilkinson soon after called, as Mr. Edwin had requested, to inform him of every circumstance he could learn respecting the deceased. He found that Mr. Herbert had been from the time of his moving to the Fleet-Prison very busy in arranging his papers—that he went not to bed the night he came there—his servant,

who had lived with him twenty years, had begged him to take some refreshment, but he could prevail for no more than a dish of coffee.—The man said, that after Wilkinson and Collet had left him the night before, he had sat down with renewed eagerness to his papers, and having tied them up in separate parcels, with labels on each, which he finished about four in the morning, he told his servant he would then go to rest—that while he was undressing, he asked, If he remembered his wedding? and being answered in the affirmative, he asked him, If, then, when he received the hand of Miss Edwin, he could have conceived he could ever arrive at such a callous piece of villany as to ruin her and her children for such a wretch as Nichols?—That finding by his master's voice and manner he was greatly affected, he begged him to divert his thoughts from a subject so distressing, and call them to the happier prospects that certainly awaited his new sentiments—that he returned no answer, but ordered him to go to bed in a little closet adjoining his
master's

master's bed's head.---Finding him, as he thought, asleep this morning, he went very silently about his business, and having his chocolate ready, he sat in expectation of his waking---that at eleven o'clock he went to his bed-side, and stooping to see if Mr. Herbert was awake, he perceived blood on the bed-clothes.—He immediately alarmed the place; when they found the unhappy man had cut his wrist quite across the artery, and was yet bleeding, although life seemed to have deserted him. Every assistance was instantly procured---it was all too late---he was supposed to have been bleeding from the time his servant left him.

C H A P. LXI.

Modern Sensibility.

MR. Edwin was very much shocked at this tragical end of a man of pleasure. The conduct of Nichols was far from surprising

H 3 him;

him; he knew that women who once swerve from the paths of virtue, seldom, very seldom, stop at their first offence; and the dissipated life he led taught him daily to know, that minds, in which honour and delicacy once reigned, when vice triumphed in their stead, were the surest to be found in the opposite extreme, when once made the prey of man. It is a kind of awful justice, every libertine knows, in the case of his companion, though vanity may blind him as to his own, that men should, in their turns, become the prey of the unhappy wretches they themselves have robbed of feeling and conscience; but that it should be the fatal means of such entire ruin was new and horrid! A transitory resolution to reform, for the first time, entered his mind—but how was it to be effected?

Anna, the sweetest model of every perfection—could she be procured, could his life of penitence be but begun by that one more sin—with her he could live sequestered from the whole world: his wife might enjoy his estate: a little, with Anna, would
be

be the excess of luxury: from her sweet examples his mind and manners should acquire the semblance of worth and honour.

With these noble ideas of relinquishing vice, by plunging more deeply into it—of rescuing himself from the latent reproaches of a guilty conscience by the plausible excuse of his own happiness—he was interrupted by Wilkinson's rising to take his leave. He would not, however, suffer him to go, but insisted on his dining; promising to accompany him to Mrs. Herbert's, in the evening.

A loud rap announced the return home of the ladies, and Edwin instantly went to Mrs. Edwin's dressing-room. Her surprise at so unusual a visitor was manifested in her countenance; and a formal curtesy on her side being answered with as polite a bow on his, Edwin, with caution and politeness, briefly acquainted her with the catastrophe of the morning, and hinted how kind it would be in her to attend the mourners, and bring them home with her—said he was sorry to find she had com-

pany to dine with her ; but he supposed he need not point out to her, that decency required their doors to be shut for a few days.

Mrs. Edwin heard him with some degree of feeling and sorrow, till he came to the part which required her to deprive herself of the society she liked ; but that was too much ; a woman of fashion is above all forms but those which, infringed, would lose her the first place at the gold table, or deprive her of the admiration of the multitude.

“ If Mr. Herbert had brought himself,
“ by his folly, to ruin and death, what
“ could that possibly be to her ? ”

“ Or if Mrs. Herbert chose to mourn
“ at an event, which, really, she could not
“ help thinking should have a very different effect, it could be no sort of reason
“ why she should break all her engagements.”

“ Indeed the thing could not be done—
“ She had appointments for every hour in
“ the

“ the succeeding week ; not one of which
“ she could break.”

“ And as to the friends engaged to dine
“ there, they were men of rank ; one of
“ whom had made overtures of marriage to
“ Cecilia ; and as Mr. Edwin proposed a
“ friend of his own being admitted, she
“ saw no reason to exclude them ; more
“ especially as it was not in her power to
“ say she knew where a card would meet
“ them at this time of day.”

“ Overtures of marriage to Cecilia !
“ Could such have been received with
“ propriety, Madam,” answered Edwin,
“ without my knowledge ?”

“ Oh, as to that, Sir,” said she, “ had
“ it been possible to have known when and
“ where to find you, Colonel Mendez
“ would, I dare say, have paid you due
“ respect !”

Edwin felt the truth of this reproach ;
but the person who had uttered it was
equally an object of contempt and dislike :
her scornful air, therefore, as she turned to
the glass, had no other effect on him, than

increasing his disgust; but the honour and wealth of his family, perhaps likely to become the prey of some needy adventurer, filled him with concern, and he resolved to acquiesce with the visit, in order to judge of the merits of the lover, and the manner in which he was received. Coolly bowing, he told her, she would please herself, and he would have the honour of attending her in the drawing-room at six o'clock.

When he joined Wilkinson again, he could not help mentioning this extraordinary conduct, both of his sister and wife. The calamities of the day had entirely driven his appointment with Cecilia out of that young man's head; but the instant her name was mentioned, the adventure of the last evening, as well as his intention of standing forth the champion of Anna, returned to his memory.

As it wanted some time of their dinner hour, and his dress required alteration, he returned to Grosvenor-square, leaving Edwin fully determined now in earnest to pursue

purſue the only object on earth that appeared worth that trouble; he therefore ordered Bates to attend him early next morning, intending to go to Layton, from whence he would not return till he had tried every argument which love and the offer of his large fortune could furniſh him with.

C H A P. LXII.

Embarrassments.

AT the appointed hour, the company met in Mrs. Edwin's drawing-room; namely, the lady herſelf, Miſs Edwin, a Mrs. Corbet, Count Maxwell, Colonel Mendez, Mr. Edwin, and, introduced by that gentleman, laſtly, Mr. Wilkinſon.

Miſs Edwin had flattered herſelf, by his not keeping his appointment, the boor was returned to the Welch mountains; her con-

fusion and surprise, therefore, at the sight of him, ushered in by her brother, was great, but not equal to his, on recognising, in the person of Mrs. Edwin, her companion in the Park; and in those of the two gentlemen, their escorts; a discovery that, in his ignorant way of thinking, did not at all speak to the credit of either party. Mrs. Edwin changed colour, as much as rouge an inch deep would suffer her; and indeed her confusion was so visible, Mrs. Corbet asked her if she was indisposed? The servant just shewing himself at the door, as the signal for dinner, happily relieved her from a question put with all the innocence in the world in mere malice.

The dinner passed without any of the party, except the one lady visitor, doing credit to the delicacies before them. Colonel Mendez found himself exceedingly embarrassed at the piercing black eyes of Mr. Edwin, who seemed to look into a soul not very well prepared for such a strict scrutiny. He had, indeed, never appeared to so little advantage before his mistress. An air of constraint

constraint clouded the usual gaiety and ease of his mien—and strange as it actually was, he found himself at a loss for words.

The Count was guarded in every look and action ; he was a very fine figure, polite, and well bred, a foreigner by birth, though perfectly conversant with the English tongue ; he appeared thoughtful and reserved.

Mrs. Edwin was, at no time, a woman whose talents would much adorn her elevated rank ; she was now particularly deficient, and not a little, by her behaviour, did she add to the very poor opinion Wilkinson entertained of her.

Cecilia, spite of her coquetry, of the presence of her lover, and of the disagreeable rencontre with Wilkinson, could not entirely hide her emotions, at the animated account given of Charles Herbert ; he was indeed *now* an indigent wanderer, his estate gone, his fortune ruined, himself and his family dependant on hers : there was no possibility of indulging her partiality for him : —she could not be so mean ; yet his person,
his

his sentiments, his manners, recurred in the most pleasing forms to her imagination:—she gave them a sigh.—What more has a coquette to bestow on the unfortunate?—and turned her willing ear to the flattery of the more prosperous Colonel.

The parade and ostentation of the meal, rendered still more tedious by the hurry every body seemed in to get it over, was at length removed.

Mr. Edwin was trying to draw the Colonel into a conversation he as industriously avoided, when Wilkinson, as the ladies were retiring, claimed Cecilia's promise of half an hour's audience.

A request so odd, at such a time, surprised her brother, and alarmed the lover; which he perceiving, as well as the young lady's embarrassment, added, if it would not intrude on the etiquette of form, he would be glad it might be in the present company.

Cecilia, not daring either to deny or explain the manner in which the promise was obtained, silently suffered him to lead her

to

to her seat, while Mrs. Edwin had recourse to her salts, which were brought in by Frajan.

Wilkinson's whole soul was in the cause of his beloved Anna; he boldly and manfully expatiated on the beauty of her person, the extent of her understanding, and on the graces of her mind: he repeated many instances of the greatness of her soul, and the goodness of her heart; he brought to the mind of Cecilia the virtue and integrity of her friend, Mrs. Mansel; her upright conduct, and her unimpeached character: he mentioned it, as the pride of his heart, that it had been devoted to Miss Mansel; and as his severest affliction, to have been rejected: he followed her to London, when he found she might have been ~~still~~ more advantageously and more honourably established; and then repeated the cruelty and injustice with which she had been treated; told them the calumny she had lain under, both with respect to Mr. Edwin, and other as infamous charges: in consequence of which, he added, in a voice choaked

choaked with the feelings of his heart, "She
" is, at this moment, a deserted, unpro-
" tected fugitive, without money, friends,
" or the means of procuring any:" and
then solemnly demanded of Miss Edwin
her authority for the accusations she had
thought proper to abet against a young per-
son who had never offended her?

This application was seconded by Mr.
Edwin, whose surprise is not to be ex-
pressed at the intelligence this harangue
conveyed.

Miss Edwin rang for Frajan;—that lady
had wisely withdrawn herself;—she was
gone out.

"What!" said Miss Edwin, "without
" my leave? Well, it is of no import; I
" believe I have evidence you will not dis-
" pute." She then repeated, in her turn,
all that Frajan had told her, and haughtily
produced Lord Sutton's card, in confirma-
tion of Anna's guilt.

"Whatever," answered Wilkinson, "was
" the situation or distress of Anna's infancy,
" I am clearly convinced the actions of
" her

“ her maturer years have been strictly consistent with the most immaculate honour ;
 “ and here,” he continued, “ is a proof,
 “ that whatever might be Lord Sutton’s
 “ sentiments at that period, he has been
 “ convinced they were founded in error.”

To the unspeakable astonishment of Miss Edwin, and all present, he gave his Lordship’s offer of marriage into the hands of Mrs. Edwin, who could *now* attend to what was going forward. After perusing it, she hinted her suspicions of a forgery, in which Miss Edwin chose to accord, though in her own mind she was convinced, not only of its authenticity, but of the injury done our heroine.

The hand and seal could not be counterfeits. Lord Sutton’s violent love-fit for her had gone off in a manner no less sudden than surprising, and he had lately wholly declined visiting in Portman-square. Cecilia wanted not cunning—and her penetration at discovering schemes of iniquity was quick in proportion to her powers and inclination for forming them ; it was there-

“ fore

fore much easier for her to develope Lord Sutton's motive, than to account for Franjan's, of whose fidelity she had not a doubt.

Wilkinson asked for, and was permitted to retain, Lord Sutton's card; and the ladies then retired, the gentlemen accompanying them, to their coffee, in order to attend them to the opera.

Mr. Edwin, too much taken up with his own affairs now to think of his sister's, very gladly suffered the gallant Colonel, for this time, to escape his farther observation; and the moment he could get rid of Wilkinson, his favourite servant was dispatched to Layton, to inquire into the truth of the anecdotes he had just heard; and, as soon as he had given him proper instructions, followed Wilkinson, by appointment, to Grosvenor-square.

Mrs. Herbert's grief for the dreadful and sudden death of her husband was greatly mollified by her sense of the resignation due to the dispensations of that Being she truly served, without the parade or shew of being

ing righteous over-much—her concern for the welfare of her children was her first earthly object : and now, that the unfortunate Mr. Herbert was no more, she considered their claim on her as doubled.

Mr. Wilkinson's attention to her and her interest, filled her with esteem and gratitude ; he knew all Mr. Herbert's affairs at the works, and urged the immediate necessity there was for her presence at the castle : but there also was an execution as well as in the works ; it was not, therefore, fit she should, in her present distressed state of mind, go there, yet something must be done ; and although Wilkinson was loath to leave London, without hearing some tidings of Anna, his own wishes gave way to his grateful desire of being of some use to Mrs. Herbert.

When Mr. Herbert came, he found him resolved on setting out for Wales as soon as the funeral of the deceased was over. This delay was rendered unnecessary by Mr. Edwin's promising to take on himself the whole direction of that, the care of Tyrrel, and every thing else in town, to render his
 aunt

aunt as easy as the recent calamity would admit. He accordingly took leave of them over-night, in order to go early in the morning; and Edwin returned home again, to the surprise of his domestics, before ten o'clock, having called at the undertaker's, and given very liberal directions respecting the interment of Mr. Herbert; which, though as private as possible, he desired should be very handsome.

Mrs. Edwin and Cecilia returned from the opera in the same company they went out with, though much mortified at the condolence of their friends on the shocking event in their family, which had told them, in pretty plain terms, the indecency of their appearing in public while the affair was so recent: indeed this was not the first thing that had happened in public very humiliating to those ladies, who had lately perceived, though their routs were still crowded, and the same quantity of tickets left at their door, that in private and select parties, and in places where women, whose presence carried propriety with it, resorted, they

they were often excluded. Their escorts at all places where they were seen, were certainly of that stamp, that few chose to dispute with them the honour of their acquaintance.

Out of humour with themselves, they the more willingly listened to the entertainment offered by their *beaux*: but this they were soon deprived of; for the happy flow of spirits possessed by Mendez, and the soft languishings of the divine Count, both vanished at the sight of Mr. Edwin.

Mrs. Corbet, a widow of small fortune, but an expensive establishment, had, at dinner, been particularly attentive to Edwin, and she resumed the same conduct at their return home; but as the gentlemen soon took their leave, and as her orders for her chair were not taken any notice of, she could not decently out-stay them. In the time that remained, nothing but weariness, constraint, and ill-humour, were visible: after, however, agreeing that it was necessary to put on mourning, which, the ladies said, was the most becoming thing in the world, and settling

ting the *etiquette* of what order of people was proper to let in, Mr. Edwin forced himself to ask after their entertainment.

“ Oh! it was odious! nothing but frights
 “ at the opera, though an immense crowd,
 “ the men lolling on each other’s shoulders,
 “ wholly attentive to themselves; and the
 “ women, nothing but impertinence and
 “ folly.” He took not the trouble to accede to, or contradict, their opinions, but, formally wishing them a good night, left his wife and sister to their own society.

The moment the polite husband entered his library, his man appeared. The first glance of his countenance assured Mr. Edwin he was full of news; and, indeed, so he was.

C H A P T E R LXIII.

Return to Anna.

THE situation in which we parted with our heroine was so interesting and deplorable, that I make no doubt my reader will
 condemn

condemn me for leaving her so long in such a state.

The fever was, as prognosticated, of the eruptive kind ; it was the small-pox. The agitation of her mind had forwarded the infection, which she had received in walking to Mrs. Wellers' the day before ; and, at the period I have mentioned of Edwin's sending to the village, she had not recovered her senses.

Bates found every thing, advanced by Wilkinson, confirmed by the people of the place. Mrs. Wilson, who did not know him, assured him Anna was gone off with 'Squire Edwin, which he did not think necessary to contradict ; and this being all the information he could by any means collect, he left Layton.

In returning through the city, he recollected his sister, who, having lost her husband, a master of a man of war, was come to town to receive some prize-money due to him, and get her pension. She had twice dined at the second table, in Portman-square ; and, as he supposed she would
soon

soon be leaving town, took the opportunity of calling at her lodgings.

He ascended the stairs to her apartment, without seeing any one; but, when he entered the front room, he was surprised to find his sister and her landlady in tears, and a large quantity of phials on the mantelpiece: which surprise was increased with their history of the matter that occasioned such an appearance.—His sister was the very identical Mrs. Hughes, who had so humanely given up her bed to Anna.

Bates was struck with the account, which tallying, in point of time, with the absence of Miss Mansel, he begged to see her.

Swelled as was her lovely face, and inflamed as were her eyes, he instantly knew her, as she lay restless and talking inwardly, but of what he could not make out. The joy this discovery gave him may be conceived to be great, as he knew the generosity of his master, in affairs where his pleasures were concerned, to be unbounded; however, he took care to conceal his knowledge

ledge of the poor stranger, till he should receive his master's commands, and left them with a promise to call the next morning.

Mr. Edwin gratified him beyond his most sanguine expectation ; and charged him to return, as he had appointed, and get his sister, at any rate, to their interest ; to order a physician ; to let nothing be wanted ; to charge Mrs. Hughes, if Anna recovered her senses, never to drop a word of him, or his family ; and, finally, to inquire if the loss of her beauty would be the consequence of her disorder.

Bates faithfully executed his commission ; but finding his sister rather nicer in the matter than he expected, or thought necessary, he bound her to the most solemn promise not to betray the name of the friend, who would wish to support Anna, to her.

A proper nurse was then procured, and a physician sent for, most famous in the disorder ; and Bates had the good luck to carry his master two very acceptable pieces of news, namely, that the Doctor gave the greatest hopes of preserving both the life

and beauty of his patient.—Again he was rewarded, and again dispatched with fresh orders to spare nothing that money could purchase, and to observe, with respect to Mr. Edwin, profound secrecy.

Mrs. Hughes was a widow of twenty-eight; the best-tempered creature in the world: her father was a tenant to the late Mr. Turbville, and now to young Edwin, on an estate adjoining Sir William Edwin's.—Bates, her brother, had been taken very young to wait on his present master, and had now lived with him twelve years; had been the tour, and indeed was the faithful repository of all his secrets. The confidence his master reposed in him, was well known not to be of the most laudable nature; and this good woman would *have* been far more satisfied to have supported the unknown young person, at her *own* expence, than to have been so assisted, under such injunctions, because the whole country round Dennis Place not only loved, but feared the Edwin family too much, to do any thing that could subject them to their
resent-

repentment. Not daring to disobey the orders of Mr. Edwin, she was yet very much dissatisfied on being so restrained : — every day and hour brought fresh instances of Mr. Edwin's solicitude for Anna's recovery, and the seventh day her senses returned ; but what a state did she find herself in !

As soon as her mental powers resumed their place, and recollection returned, what a dreadful gloom presented itself ! She had but a faint remembrance of accepting Mrs. Hughes' bed, but all the preceding events came unsought into her sickening imagination. The violence of the fever abated with the turn of the disorder ; but she was so weak as to be unable to speak, and so sore as to be unable to move : the tears, that gushed from her eyes, were the first proofs, to the women about her, that she was sensible.

Their attention and tenderness were redoubled ; every thing, that could soothe or revive her, was done ; and, as she grew stronger, every painful retrospect avoided : but it was not in the power of their kind-

ness to banish the killing thoughts with which her situation filled her.

The more she was obliged to those humane strangers, the more the idea of the expence and trouble they had been at afflicted her: she regretted, in the agonies of her soul, the preserving her existence, which seemed, from her infancy, to be devoted to misery; and her extreme grief not only counteracted the effect of those medicines which were prescribed, but kept her in so weak a state, that the Doctor began to be apprehensive for her life.

Bates was constantly there three times a day; and this piece of ill news he did not fail to carry to Mr. Edwin, who, distracted at the thoughts of now losing her, contrived (as he supposed, with great reason, her low state was brought on by the distress of her circumstances) a plan, from which, he hoped, the most favourable consequences would ensue.

He had got into his possession the two letters Mrs. Mansel had written to Anna, and, by their help, procured one to be
written

written, as from that good man, expressing the most paternal solicitude for her recovery, assigning his own infirm state of health as the reason he came not himself.— He told her he had, by means of a friend, traced her with great difficulty, and inclosed a bill for thirty pounds, recommending it to her to keep as concealed as possible.

This letter was delivered her by the late Mr. Herbert's footman, a man whom she well knew, and who being now wholly dependent on Mr. Edwin, he could not doubt the fidelity of.

Anna wept, and asked a thousand questions of the man, who promised to call again before he left town. The great trouble her malady had occasioned in the house where she was, rendered this bill very acceptable; though it was accompanied with regret at being still in want of the support, she knew her paternal friend could ill spare.

However, with the first gleam of pleasure they had seen on her countenance, she insisted on paying them for their attendance,

and what they had disbursed for her. This, Mrs. Hughes was instructed to gratify her in; and, having made out a very trifling account, was handsomely paid. The Doctor too took his fees from her; and now a little more at ease, she recovered her strength and spirits. The disorder, though very thick on her body, had been remarkably favourable to her face. She had yet money enough to support her for a little time, and to purchase a few necessaries she wanted.

CHAPTER LXIV.

Meetings of Old Friends.

THE first day Anna was able to sit up to dinner, Mrs. Hughes, with the woman of the house and her daughter, partook, at her request, of the little repast; which when ended, she thanked them severally for their great kindness; adding, that as the appearance of such a young creature, thrown
upon

upon their charity in so remarkable a manner, who neither then, nor now, seemed to be the care or concern of any body, and who really was more destitute of relations than, God be praised, she was of friends, since she knew she had one of the latter description, though she was not blessed with any of the former, must have excited their curiosity; a curiosity so natural, that if it were untinged with doubts to her disadvantage, their confidence must be the result of their own goodness of heart: she would, therefore, tell them the sad claims she had on their humane feelings.

“ Alas! (continued she, weeping) “ the
“ accident that brought me here is not the
“ first by which I have been left, a miserable orphan, on the pity of strangers: I
“ am not acquainted with my own name; “
“ the one I go by is that of the friend, to
“ whose paternal love I owe the power of
“ repaying the pecuniary obligations I was
“ under to you. You have before you,
“ my good friends, the child of sorrow, the
“ daughter of charity. What, or who my
I 4 “ parents

“ parents were, or whether I am by blood
“ connected with a living being, I know
“ not. The person supposed to be my fa-
“ ther died at a strange lodging, where he
“ had not so much as slept; and I was
“ taken from thence by a clergyman.”
“ Who, merciful God!” exclaimed the
landlady of the house, trembling with eager-
ness, “ was that clergyman’s name Dalton?”
—Anna, astonished, answered it was.

“ And your’s, my dear child,” said the
woman, “ is Anna. Oh! my sweet crea-
“ ture! (embracing her) have hope, have
“ confidence in the wisdom, as well as the
“ mercy of that Being, who, in a more
“ dreadful state than that of deserted in-
“ fancy, conducted you a second time to
“ the same humble instrument of his good-
“ ness for preservation! Yes, my child, it
“ was at my house your father expired, and
“ necessity only could have prevailed on
“ me ever to resign you, though I could
“ not doubt Mrs. Dalton’s care of you;
“ but now we part no more.”

Anna,

Anna, having been told the person at whose house she was left was dead, could hardly credit the woman's assertions; the particulars, indeed, had never been willingly entered on by Dalton; and when, by dint of persevering intreaties, he could be dragged into the subject, he told her no person was now living, but himself, that was in any way witness to the sudden dissolution of her parents, who were foreigners. When she repeated those circumstances to Mrs. Clark (it was indeed her) and the vicissitudes of her life, she again and again embraced her, calling her by every endearing epithet, and bid her look forward, with certain hope, to the events of a life so miraculously preserved. — “My dear child,” said she, “what end could that man, who I
“ always believed a good Christian, have in
“ deceiving you, I cannot think: it is now
“ many years since I lost all trace of him
“ or you; and my own circumstances getting from bad to worse, he might not be
“ more successful in his inquiries after me;
“ but he has in possession things you should

“ certainly be acquainted with, which might
“ lead to a discovery of your family—your
“ father, I am sure, was a gentleman.”

She then told her every circumstance that happened both to him and the woman who accompanied him; to which was added, the account of what effects were left: the value of the watch and rings was not the object that most struck them; it was the entire concealment of them and the box of papers.

While the sad retrospect of the event, which had deprived our heroine of every natural friend, and exposed her to the manifold evils of poverty and the cutting necessity of being dependent on strangers for subsistence, filled her with grief and agony: she could not help joining in admiration at that Providence, which guided her steps to the habitation of the only person in the world, besides the Daltons, who could give her, from their own knowledge, information of what was of so much consequence for her to know.

Mrs.

Mrs. Clark protested she never more should leave her, except for her own advantage, or till somebody owned her;—and, perceiving the sorrow this hint excited, charged her to keep up her spirits, since she was sure her life had not been so evidently the peculiar care of heaven for nothing.—“ Here, only think,” said she, “ what a blessing it is you should have “ such an education to set off your sweet “ face; and now that face so charmingly “ preserved: and then, again, you see in “ how many instances you have met with “ such good friends:—you must take the “ bitter with the sweet; and all, I am sure, “ will be for the best.”

The effusions of a joyful heart were visible in all Mrs. Clark’s words; but, notwithstanding her confidence in the principles of the reverend teacher, she had at times very strong suspicions that the trunk contained something he wished not to be known; and his so industriously concealing from Anna, that, and every other circumstance that could lead to any know-

ledge of her family, now as strongly confirmed those suspicions. *She* was in *reality*; what he *appeared*, sober and religious; her outward professions were perfectly consistent with the principles on which her actions were founded. She was still a member of a Methodist society; and for those tenets she had the strongest partiality. To suppose a minister, who was held in high estimation among the preachers of her sect, guilty of wronging an orphan, under the sanction of charity, was scandalising the whole body, and was what she wished to avoid; more especially as it might not be so. He might have motives for his conduct perfectly consistent with his sacred character, though not requisite to be made public; but those she was resolved to inquire into. Without, therefore, hinting at her design, she contented herself for the present with shewing every kindness to Anna, who was again brought under her roof in so destitute a situation. She could, she said, not doubt, but Providence meant her to be the humble means, either of re-
storing

flourishing her to her family, or preserving her from some dreadful evil which might else have awaited her; and therefore, poor as she was, she was sure something would turn up to enable her to keep her.

The words of the good enthusiast struck Mrs. Hughes very forcibly;—her own ideas of the plot laid by Mr. Edwin convinced her they were indeed too pregnant with truth, and half converted her to the faith by which they were inspired; being fully satisfied in her own mind, his particular attention to such a young person could have but one end. Her conscience reproached her for concealing suspicions so well founded; but the prejudices of her whole life were too strong for her good wishes; she therefore resolved to hasten the conclusion of her business, which had been already delayed beyond her expectation, and leave town as soon as she could.

Anna, once more with a real friend, and treated with maternal indulgence, recovered daily; and Mrs. Clark bringing to her mind constantly her lost friend Mrs.

Mansel,

Mansel, the Llandore family likewise obtruded themselves on her ideas. The suit of clothes she had embroidered for Lady Edwin, so much admired, gave her the hint of a mode by which she might perhaps procure the means of subsistence, more flattering to her pride than going to service. She had no sooner mentioned it to Mrs. Clark, than she sallied out in quest of work.

But whether it was her appearance, which was that of a primitive Christian, in a plain black sattin bonnet and cloak, a light-brown fine camblet gown, small sharp features—or whether she happened to apply to shops who were, as they said, overstocked with hands, she returned tired and unsuccessful.

Poor Anna was much disappointed; but recollecting the person who got the trimming made for Lady Edwin, employed a great number of people, as she had been once at his house with that lady, she resolved, as soon as her health would permit her to go out, to try her own luck.

In

In the mean while, Mr. Edwin, having settled all Mrs. Herbert's affairs, and paid the expence of Tyrrel's accident, began to grow impatient to see our heroine. Mrs. Hughes, however, insisted he should not come to her lodgings without leave from Anna. Her inconvenient scruples greatly embarrassed him: he had no hopes of obtaining such a permission while she was there; he therefore insisted on her immediate removal; which she was obliged to comply with; and returned to Wales without completing her business.

C H A P T E R LXV.

The Married Lover.

EDWIN then flattered himself little trouble and less resistance would attend the completion of his desires, and began his operations with great spirit. He inquired for her as a stranger, and was immediately shewn

shewn to the apartment Mrs. Hughes had left. Anna's surprise and displeasure at this visit were equal; it affronted her virtue, it alarmed her pride. Reduced by her illness, weak and languid, she was an interesting and affecting object. Edwin's heart was by no means callous to the feelings of humanity: he apologized for his intrusion; and with tenderness and delicacy (when she had recovered her first alarm) made the most flaming profession of a violent attachment;—offered her a *carte blanche*, and, throwing himself at her feet, vowed it was impossible for him to exist without her.

The innate love of virtue, and the natural abhorrence of vice, implanted early in the mind of this amiable girl, would have filled her with horror at such a proposal from any one; but in this instance, it was aggravated by her knowledge of his recent marriage, his family connections, and by her sense of justice and propriety; yet her indignation being really against the vice, while the son of Lady Edwin, the relation

of

of the Herberts, was on those accounts the object of her compassion, she coolly and dispassionately rejected, in the most unequivocal terms, all his offers; remonstrated with him on the barbarity of his conduct to his wife, and the scandal such a mode of living, if adopted, must entail on his family. Eloquent in the cause of honour, she intreated him to have some concern for the peace of his worthy mother, and some regard for the credit of his own posterity, which he knew to be of such consequence to Sir William and Lady Edwin.

He, in return, denied the charge of barbarity to his wife, as she had quite as little feeling for him as he could possibly have for her. His mother, his family, and his posterity, would have reason to bless her, if, by accepting his offer, she would condescend to be his sweet guide through life. He had no joy at home, no pleasure abroad: his fortune was already impaired by the want of happiness in his domestic circle; since he had run from one evil to another, in vain search of the content he found

found it absurd to seek at home. Had his parents really consulted his happiness, would they have joined him, by their engagements, so early in life, to a woman he could not help despising? In the union formed for him, they had considered neither his taste nor inclinations. He would go abroad with her: she should there bear his name, and share his fortune:—he would give the world, if he had more to offer her.

He was here interrupted by our heroine, who said she was grieved to find he could be at such ease with himself, on so wicked a proposal, as to attempt such a justification: she could, therefore, only beg him to have so much compassion for her situation, as to refrain teasing her; and so much respect for unoffending innocence, as to forbear insulting her farther: it would answer no purpose; he would find her principles were not to be corrupted; and, as to her inclinations, she had told him long ago, and she now solemnly repeated it, were it in his power to offer her marriage, with the
full

full consent of his family, poor, destitute, and almost friendless as she was, they were too fervently engaged to admit one doubt of her rejection, not only of him, but the whole world.

Mr. Edwin wanted not understanding or knowledge of the female heart ; he could not therefore doubt but the lips of Anna spoke the language of hers. Mortifying as was this conviction, it did not prevail on him to forego a suit, in which all his desires were so interested : the greater the difficulty, the more valuable the conquest. The place of her residence was wholly unknown to any but himself ; she was poor, and, but for him, must have wanted common necessaries ; she would yet want them, if he withheld his bounty. He found, in her flight from Dalton's, her repugnance to Sutton ; and, though he knew not all the circumstances, he naturally supposed the more the report of her being with him was believed, the less likely she would be to find any other protector. While, therefore, he could contrive to keep her concealed, while she continued distressed, he

he had hopes; and, while there were hopes, he would persist. Affecting to be moved by her arguments, he then endeavoured to prevail on her to suffer him to visit her as a friend, and to supply her with any money she might have occasion for. Anna absolutely refused both; and he was obliged to leave her, with no hope of success to his wishes, but those founded on her distress. From her he went immediately to Dalton's, and told them, haughtily, he was come to see Miss Mansel's clothes sent her. The poor parson was struck into confusion at this requisition: Was it possible? Could Anna be with Mr. Edwin at last? Farewell, then, to all his hopes from his noble patron. In the same style of proud superiority he was told to deliver every thing belonging to Anna. Irresolute how to act for the best; that is to say, most for his own interest, he answered, a gentleman in the neighbourhood had put his seal on her trunks, at her own desire; that gentleman was sent for, and acquainted with the demand.

Doctor

Doctor Collet, surprised, and indeed sorry, to see this undoubted proof of her being with Mr. Edwin, answered, If Miss Mansel had sent for her things, he presumed the gentleman would produce her written order. No; it was not of consequence; he was known, and would be answerable for her actions; he was ready to pay him, and insisted on having the trunks, and bid them detain them at their peril.

Dalton, recollecting all was now over, with their hopes of the friendship of the Peer, and concluding this would be the last advantage he could expect from his late ward, contrary to the advice of Mr. Collet, he greedily seized this last occasion of pocketing a sum of money on her account, and received from Mr. Edwin a draft for one hundred and fifty pounds, for her lodging, board, education, and cloathing. He then delivered her effects to the young libertine, who, hugging himself on his success, sent them in a hired cart, in his name, to an hotel, of no great eminence for its modest company, and presently left Layton. Dr. Collet

Collet, with a rueful countenance and disappointed mind, went first to Mrs. Wellers, to whom he related the visit of Mr. Edwin, lamenting with her the depravity of the times, and concluding they had been too sanguine in the acquittal of Anna, who, however blameless hitherto, had, at last, entirely forfeited all claim to esteem; and then returned home to write to Mr. Herbert.

Mr. Edwin, highly satisfied with his prize, resolved to make a merit of restoring it to Anna, at the same time he knew it would ruin her in the opinion of every friend; but that was a trifle beneath his thought. Elated with his success, he went to Brookes's, and from thence was engaged in a scene of dissipation, to give it the tenderest of names, that put our heroine out of his head for a few days.

CHAPTER LXVI.

The Embroiderers.

THE health and strength of our heroine being now considerably restored, dressed in a clean plain morning gown, she took a coach to Pall Mall, and alighting a few paces from the door, walked to the embroiderer's.

Mr. Desmoulins was a Frenchman, and a fop, but very ingenious, and in high vogue in his way among the first people. His wife, to whose former husband he was foreman, was an Irish virago, old enough to be his mother, extremely jealous of her husband's love and her own authority, which last she could not bear should be invaded, by one whom she had raised to the honour of her bed and the profits of her trade, from a state of indigent servitude. Monsieur, on his part, conceiving the felicity of his hand at the altar, and the possession of his most charming person, so far from fairly purchased

purchased by the change in his fortune, had been thrown away on an ungrateful woman, not sensible of her extreme good bargain, felt not the least disposition to give way to the imperious temper of his lady, or to dissipate her jealousy by not conversing with those she disliked, namely, all who were younger or more agreeable than herself, or by exhibiting any particular proof of fondness for her; in short, the whole pleasure and delight of this happy pair was to thwart and contradict each other. Whatever Mrs. Desmoulins approved, was sure, with the utmost politeness and civility, to be disapproved by her husband; and whatever was proposed by him, was sure to be opposed by his wife, though to little purpose; for, though Monsieur protested it was with great regret and extreme mortification he varied from her opinion, he never gave up his point.

On inquiring for Mr. Desmoulins, Anna was shewn into a back shop, where, assorting of patterns, sat this amiable couple. The lady, who seldom rose from her seat to
people

people that came on foot, glanced scornfully at our heroine; nor would she, had Anna's figure been less captivating, have probably farther noticed her. Mr. Desmoulins, without looking up, demanded how he could have the honour of obeying her commands? Anna blushed, hesitated—blushed again. The lady fired at the sight: this was some mistress of her husband's, who could be so confused on no other account than her happening to be present—“Why don't you speak, young woman?” said she, in a tone that almost petrified her; while it called the man's attention from what he was about, who, more in opposition to his wife than in compassion to her confusion, begged she would compose herself, and let him know to what happy accident he owed the honour of seeing her, and intreated she would inform him how he could have the pleasure of obeying her commands? The extreme politeness of the husband was not less embarrassing to Anna, than the unprovoked rudeness of the wife. After many efforts to usher in her request,

in a manner least likely to give offence, she at length stammered out a petition to be employed ;—which was instantly negatived by the wife, and granted by the husband. He did not, however, forget to enquire what security she meant to give him for the work he should entrust her with. A question so new and unexpected, struck her into a confusion, of which Mrs. Desmoulins did not fail to make her advantage, by remarking, that none but a fool would think of employing her :—an insinuation the least likely of all others to lessen his confidence. He, therefore, regardless of his wife's sarcastical expressions, and deaf to her keen remonstrances, gave our heroine an elegant waistcoat, contenting himself with her address instead of a bondsmen. She returned home, too much elated to attend to the ill-breeding of Mrs. Desmoulins, and told Mrs. Clark, in raptures, of her success. A second-hand frame was immediately purchased, and the work began with such eagerness, she would hardly spare any time for eating and rest. Mr.

Edwin

Edwin called in vain at her door ; his letters were returned unread, and every offered favour declined with resolution and consistency. No princess could be happier than Anna Mansel while so laudably employed. The waistcoat was soon finished and carried home.

However discordant were the general dispositions of Mr. and Mrs. Desmoulins, there was one thing, and only one, in which they perfectly agreed ; that was, their own interest. The scolding brow of the one, and the careless indifference of the other, were quickly changed at first sight of the waistcoat. They were both good judges of their business ; and the particular neatness and beauty of her work, changed the harsh, unwomanly features of the mistress into a placid smile. She was liberally paid, and given fresh employ, of a superior sort, with promise of constant work. Her heart bounded with joy. The moment of her return, she settled a price for her board and lodging, as beneficial to Mrs. Clark as convenient to herself.

No art was left unessayed by Mr. Edwin: but his attempts to bias her pure mind to evil recoiled on himself; and his plan of succeeding through her distress, was rendered fruitless by her industry: he was therefore forced to give up, for the present, views that had cost him so dear, and lay by in hope of yet being so fortunate as to be in some degree necessary to the proud beauty, whose charms he could neither forget, nor wholly give up.

Wilkinson was indefatigable in Mrs. Herbert's affairs. Sir William Edwin advanced money to clear both the estate and iron works: he sent his sister the most fraternal consolations; and, with fresh professions of regard, gave her son leave to please himself in his stay abroad. Those matters settled, Mr. Wilkinson returned to London, accompanied by Mr. Mansel, whose anxiety was insupportable at the account he gave him of Anna. The last words of his beloved wife dwelt on his ears from the moment he heard the injuries she had suffered; she occupied all his waking thoughts, and
his

his dreams represented her in the most helpless and forlorn situation. He well knew the cause both of her leaving the lodge, and changing her name. His wife, whose memory was not less dear than sacred, had formed her mind, and been the guide of her early years; could she be then less than perfect?—Tormented with his regret for having suffered her to leave him, and by his terror for what might be her then distress, he resolved, on a journey to London; although, from his gouty habit, he was very unfit to undertake it.

The sight of her old friends afforded great comfort to Mrs. Herbert; and Patty rejoiced in the hope of being restored to the society she loved. Their doors were shut, though that precaution was almost needless; for, as they were known to be left in very dependent circumstances, they were not likely to be thronged with visitors, in a place where, the heart of Mrs. Herbert being still less known than her person, she could have no chance to excite the attention of the worthy few, who were,

from congenial virtues, qualified to associate with her. Neither Mrs. Edwin nor Cecilia had condescended to pay her one condoling visit; and Mr. Edwin having liberally supplied her with money, and done every thing he could do with respect to her affairs, soon became weary of urging his wife and sister to pay her some attention, or shew any countenance to their young relation, as well as murdering any part of his own time, by bestowing it on an old aunt and insipid cousin.

Mr. Mansel's trouble was cordially shared by Miss Herbert; who, not being now under any restraint, was as warm in the praise of her friend as he could be himself, and so earnest to recover her, that she prevailed on her mother to postpone their journey to Llandore a few days, in hopes to have her with them:—not a little did she rejoice in the possibility of renewing those scenes of tranquil happiness they had passed together.

Next morning Mr. Wilkinson and his reverend friend went to Dalton's, on the earnest

earnest inquiry they were determined to make after the lost Anna.—The looks of Mr. Mansel pictured his mind; they were mild, serene, and benevolent: his countenance had acquired a solemn melancholy cast since the death of his wife, which was at this period much increased by the uncertain state of the charge she had left.—True religion, and unaffected piety, with a soul rendered indulgent to the foibles of others by patience and meek forbearance, marked his character.—He knew the sacred profession of Dalton, and could not encourage a thought of his having acted wilfully wrong, and therefore expected to find him in affliction at the same cause with himself.—He was deceived.—Dalton had been to Lord Sutton, to communicate to him Mr. Edwin's visit, and was, in consequence of his delivering the clothes, turned out in disgrace and contempt: he was therefore secretly exulting on having secured the cash, and bestowed no farther thought on her he had so villainously robbed.—Mrs. Dalton, setting her down as a lost creature, both as to this world and the next, agreed

it could be no sin to make such a libertine pay for his bad actions.

A fresh inquiry after Miss Mansel then was not likely to give them much pleasure; but the manners and character of a good clergyman carry with them an indescribable weight among the most abandoned; and guilt did that in Mr. Dalton which a real veneration did in his wife—it rendered them obliging and communicative: but after going through the story of her elopement, sinking only the cause, when they came to Mr. Edwin's demand of her clothes and payment of her debt, neither of the gentlemen could for a while credit them, till it was confirmed by Dr. Collet; and even then Wilkinson swore there must be some mystery in it. Mansel thought so too; and they returned to London with increased anxiety, but not with less confidence in the honour of our heroine.

They went directly to Portman-square. —Mr. Edwin was not at home.—“When would it be most likely to meet with him?”—“It was very uncertain.”—They called again, and again—They wrote with



with as little success—They were always too soon or too late. Advertisements were put in the papers, describing Anna, and requesting her to return to her friend, to no purpose. Mrs. Clark kept no servant; her daughter and herself did the work of their little house between them—they never read a paper; and the residence of Anna was entirely unknown to every body, but those whose desire it was to conceal it. At length, wearied with their unavailing inquiries, in despair of finding her, and Mrs. Herbert's presence being as necessary at Llandore as Mr. Mansel's at his rectory, and Wilkinson's at the iron works, they were obliged to give up their pursuit; but Wilkinson protested he would not quit London till he had seen that vile Lord, who was the original cause of all Anna's misfortunes. In a fit of grief and disappointment, he inquired him out; and, at the expence of five shillings to his porter, got admittance to the deserted lover, whose unfortunate passion had every prognostic of costing him very dear.

C H A P. LXVII.

The Intrusion.

LORD Sutton was at this time very much indisposed, but too fond of the world, and too little at ease with himself, to bear the confinement of a sick room. Villars, with a careful serene countenance, was standing the brunt of his ill-nature and brutality; ~~she~~ he had been making some tea, which he said was too strong, and protested he was the worst used man on the face of God's earth; that, however, it was his own fault, for trusting any thing to such an absolute idiot.

A man in shabby regimentals, who had the honour of being led Captain to this august personage, was appealed to, and agreed that it certainly was a pity Mrs. Villars was not more attentive; to be sure, the tea was strong, though some people (winking at her) liked it so: now his wife made the best tea in the world, would Mrs. Villars
but

but learn of her. In this kind offer, and what was farther meant to follow, he was interrupted by a sudden and involuntary start of his Lordship. In a voice of terror he perfectly screamed out, "And who are "you?" to Wilkinson, who was announced by the servant, as a gentleman that had particular business with him. Lord Sutton's unusual salutation, trembling form, and agitated countenance, frightened the whole group.

Wilkinson's natural courage equalled that of most young men; but he nevertheless felt himself shocked, in an unaccountable manner, at what he thought was the apprehension of guilt, forgetting that as yet his Lordship was unacquainted with his errand. The shaking of his limbs, the ghastly stare, the quivering of his lips turned white as ashes, still continuing, as he incessantly demanded who the intruder was, whence he came from, and what he wanted, still more disconcerted him. Villars and the Captain concluded some dreadful frenzy had seized him: they begged Wilkinson to withdraw;

which he would not consent to, but on condition of re-admission if he presently recovered. As he was retiring, he was stopped by Lord Sutton, who, somewhat more composed, bid him stay; but was again struck with terror at his beginning to speak, interrupting him as he was going to open his business.

“Phantom of horror!” said the trembling culprit, “do these pangs, which now shake my frame, announce thy errand? Thou living image of a murdered angel, art thou come to visit in vengeance the destroyer of thy mother? Is then the day of retribution already come? Why did you let him in?” continued he, fiercely turning to the Captain and Villars. “Who, my good Lord?” answered he; “this gentleman says he is a personal stranger to your Lordship: he waits upon you on business.”

“Let him be brief then, and never let me see him more.” The Captain would then have retired, but was bid not to stir; and even the presence of Villars was considered

dered as a protection. Wilkinson was then called upon for his business, which he was now loath to enter on, as the disturbed mind of the Peer rendered his reproaches an act of unnecessary punishment and mortification to a poor wretch, whose sense of guilt was so very acute; but, on his being still urged to speak, the particular softness and tone of his voice again struck Lord Sutton into a panic:—scalding strangers rolled down his cheeks. As well as the extraordinary scene would let him, Wilkinson entered on his business; and producing his Lordship's card to Lady Edwin, demanded on what grounds he had so confirmed the testimony of Mrs. Frajan? A reprieve to a criminal at execution could not have a more instantaneous effect than this question. He threw himself back in his chair, as if taking breath.—“Is this then *all*?” cried he.—“*All*, my Lord! answered Wilkinson. “Is the ruin of the character of an innocent young person, and depriving her of the few friends her modest merit had attracted, then, such a trifle? Or
“do

“ do you imagine your subsequent offer of
“ marriage could compensate for such an
“ outrage to her innocence, such a disgrace
“ to your own honour ? I must, my Lord,
“ insist on knowing what were your rea-
“ sons for the suspicions this unmanly card
“ confirms. I am the disinterested friend
“ of Miss Mansel ; and, depend on it, I
“ will follow you to the verge of the earth,
“ till her guilt is proved, or till her calum-
“ niators shall manifest her innocence.”

“ You belong to the Edwins, I presume ?”

—“ I do not, my Lord ; I have not the
“ happiness of belonging to any body :
“ urged by inclination, and bound only by
“ honour, I avow myself the protector of
“ Miss Mansel’s character. Her person,
“ wherever it is, as far as depends on her-
“ self, is, I know, incorruptible.”

“ If, young man, you credit my offer of
“ marriage to her, you may be sure I shall
“ be glad to find it so : I adore her, and am
“ not more solicitous to obtain her, from
“ passion, than from the wish to make an
“ honourable amends for the injury I was
“ innocently led to do her.

“ In-

“Innocently!” repeated Wilkinson, indignantly.—“Yes, Sir, innocently,” answered his Lordship. — “Mrs. Melmoth perhaps might be, and I believe was, imposed on by the wicked French woman, who, I am clear, was herself the thief; and if you really are the friend of Miss Mansel, you will evince it more by uniting your endeavours with mine, to discover the place of her retreat; and, if she be yet virtuous, persuading her to become Lady Sutton, than in vainly railing at me.”—

Wilkinson coloured. — “*I persuade her to become Lady Sutton! — I would die first.—No, dearest Anna, if I must lose thee; if the faithful heart, where thy image is ever present, must resign thee, may it be to one, blooming and lovely as thyself, whose honour and whose worth shall insure thy happiness; — not,*” looking scornfully at him, “to a man, whose vices render him contemptible, and whose hoary head is, by his own voluntary actions, covered with shame instead of honour.”—

“This,”

“ This,” replied Lord Sutton, “ is a language I would not bear, were it not in my own house.”—“ Your age and infirmities,” returned the young man, “ will be your protection in any other place as well as this ; but, depend on it, no place shall protect you from the shame and contempt you deserve, or screen you from the voice of truth, when and wherever I meet you.” So saying, he flung out of the room, throwing his card on the table.

The eyes of Lord Sutton followed him.—When quite out of sight, with a deep sigh, he examined the card ; and, after some time, broke silence, with asking the Captain what he thought of him?

It was proper *now*, that there was no danger, for the valiant toad-eater to be in a rage at the insults offered his patron ; he begged the address, that he might have the honour of chastising him.—“ *You !* ”—answered Lord Sutton, with a significant emphasis that stagnated the poor Captain ; not so much on account of the insinuation it certainly implied, of his want of prowess, as from

from the uncertainty it left him in, of the sentiments it behoved him to express of a matter that had occasioned such uncommon agitations in his principal.—A silence ensued for some moments, when his lordship thought proper to leave the room, and retire to his library.—Mrs. Villars, relieved from her morning's attendance, was following him, but the Captain stopped her, to beg she would favour him with her opinion of the late transaction ; for which he promised her his wife should teach her to make tea : this, as she, he presumed, was a woman of character; and Villars was not, he chose to insinuate, would be a great condescension; but that foolish woman excused herself, with her usual indifference to the objects around her; not having formed any opinion, she could give none; and hinted her fears, in rather a severer manner than she was accustomed to, “ that not having had his lady's practice, she should be little better for her instructions.” She then left the poor thing, spitefully hurt at her words and manner respecting his spouse ;

spouse ; and in a doleful dilemma how to conduct himself in the case of Wilkinson, whose address Lord Sutton had taken with him, he returned home without an invitation to dinner, where, notwithstanding his profound respect for her, he thought proper to quarrel with, and beat this very best of all possible wives, because she had not the art of procuring provision without money.

Mr. Wilkinson attended Mrs. Herbert to Llandore, accompanied by Mr. Mansel : they all left London full of regret and anxiety, for the fate of a young creature who was the object of their mutual regard and esteem.

C H A P. LXVIII.

A Robbery.

WE left Anna happier than she had been since the loss of Mrs. Mansel ; her employers were charmed with her work ;
and

and as it was always fetched and carried by Hannah Clark, who was a very ordinary little woman of thirty, she extorted more civility from Mrs. Desmoulins, than it was possible so fine a figure as Anna's could have been entitled to.

The winter was now approaching; and as Mr. Edwin, neither by himself nor servants, had given her any interruption while Mr. Mansel was in town, for fear (which was rarely the case) they might place a spy on his actions, she began to conceive herself safe from any farther insult: she had not again seen, to her surprise, the person who brought her the letter from Mr. Mansel; but concluding he had forgotten to call, wrote to that friend her thanks for his seasonable supply, and giving a brief account of all that happened to her. She made two holidays to do this in, and was just sitting down to her frame, when Mrs. Desmoulins entered her apartment, followed by her maid with a large bundle; her business was, in the first place, to satisfy herself of the place of our heroine's residence; and,
in

in the next, to give her the train of a suit of clothes to finish.—The coat was already done; it was intended for a present from a young lady of quality to her sister, a new-married Duchess.—She very much wished to have it made up by the next birth-day; but was taken with a fit of weariness, and would do no more to it herself; though its being finished by another hand was to be kept a profound secret.—It was elegantly fancied, and variegated in the most beautiful taste, with embroidery, foil, spangles, and crape; and an ample price was to be paid if it were done well.—Anna readily undertook, and instantly set about, a job, from which she expected as much credit as profit.—She had proceeded rapidly in her task, which had more taste than labour in it; when having sent for a fresh supply of one shade of silk, she accidentally cast her eye on the paper in which it was wrapped—it was part of a magazine, and contained the deaths of the month. The first in the list was the name of Charles Herbert, Esq. of Llandore Castle.

It

It occurred not to her, that the father and son were both of one Christian name—She was sensible only of the idea that young Herert was dead.—A thousand circumstances now confirmed those dreadful surmises—His ill health, which obliged him to go out of town at the period of her leaving Grosvenor-square—Mr. Edwin's mourning—The total extinction of her hopes, by his entirely giving her up, which, not hearing from him, though her abode was so well known to his family, she concluded to be the case, now all rose to her imagination, and conspired to distract her.—Again the fatal paper was examined—it was indeed Charles Herbert—a dreadful mist overspread her eyes—she sunk senseless on the floor.

Alarmed at the noise of her fall, Mrs. Clark flew to her apartment. The sight of her dear child, as she fondly called her, bereft of sense and motion, had nearly thrown her into the same condition; the house, the neighbours were alarmed—the apothecary summoned.—He let her
blood

blood, and she soon returned to a sense of sorrow exceeding all she had yet felt.

In the midst of her misfortunes, when every other hope forsook her, she had indulged a latent pleasure in the hope of being dear to Herbert : to this, unknown to herself, was added another, that, by some happy means or other, she should again be blest in his society. The last interview had left its traces on her mind, never to be erased. When she was particularly sensible of her misfortunes, the remembrance of it was her never-failing resource ; or when she suffered her naturally sanguine temper to look forward to a possibility of better days, still *he* was her first object : but those flattering ideas no longer soothed her imagination ; the relentless hand of fate had torn from her heart the last, and only fond hope ; the creation was now a void ; the world had nothing in it for her ; the most amiable, the most beloved youth was no more—she might now, without fear of injury to Miss Edwin, without dread of disturbing the peace of his family, indulge in a luxury of grief the retrospect of his virtues ;

ties; she could live over again each scene that had bound her soul to his.—She yet saw and felt the benignant glance of his eyes—their soft languishments still melted on her thoughts. But, alas! he was lost for ever and for ever.—In this distracted situation tears and sighs were her only relief. Unable to bear the light, it was in vain Mrs. Clark implored her to repose her sorrows in her faithful bosom—she mourned the dear youth inwardly and incessantly—her rest and appetite both forsook her—and had not another calamity awaited her, which, by rousing her faculties, made her grief change its object, in all probability she would have sunk under the secret agonies of her mind.

Bates, who knew the wishes of his master, called often on Mrs. Clark's daughter, and pretending love to that foolish woman, had egress and regress there unknown to her mother. A few days after this afflicting circumstance to Anna, Mrs. Clark was sent for to visit a sick brother at Chatham: it was with great reluctance she left her

her in such a state of mind and body ; but, as she expected some trifles at his death, our heroine insisted on her going.

The first day of her absence, worn out by grief and want of rest, Anna threw herself on the bed, and unfortunately for a few few minutes forgot her cares. In this interval Bates called—Hannah was in the kitchen under the shop : not meeting with any one below, a sudden impulse of curiosity carried him up stairs. The door of her apartment being open, the beauty of the work induced him, treading very light, and seeing the room empty, to take a nearer view of it.

In that evil moment, her ill fate put it in his head, having often heard his master curse the embroidery, as the means of her being enabled to support herself independent of him, that if she was deprived of such resource, Mr. Edwin must yet succeed ; he therefore silently stripped the train out of the frame, and the coat hanging on the chairs for her guide, bundled the whole
up,

up, and got off unheard and undiscovered.

Anna's sorrow was too poignant to suffer her long to rest.—The little bed-room adjoined to that in which her work stood. But who can express her feelings, at the sight of her frame stripped, and the coat gone?—She ran down stairs almost frantic. Hannah was by that time in the shop.—Search was made—the neighbourhood alarmed—A little girl who came for a skain of thread, said she met a man coming out of the shop with a bundle.—Anna, half distracted, knew not yet the consequence of this misfortune. She got Hannah to go to Mr. Desmoulins'—He and his wife were outrageous—they were ruined—they should lose their best customers and friends—no money could compensate for the loss—but if it could, they had taken no securities. Mrs. Desmoulins blamed her husband; he cursed, for the first time, his own folly; and both vowed revenge on our ill-fated heroine.

On undertaking the work, she had mentioned her having done Lady Edwin's suit which was so much admired.—Away flew Mrs. Desmoulins to Sir William Edwin's to make inquiries.—The servants there told her, the person who worked that suit for their Lady, was said not to be honest; and was, moreover, now in keeping.—Inflamed by this news, she returned to her husband: she thought what his ridiculous obstinacy would come to—he would employ the slut—but she knew his motives, and the world should know them too—She would go to Lady Harriot—she would throw herself at the feet of the Ducheſs—she would diſcloſe thoſe injuries ſhe had hitherto borne in meekneſs and ſilence. Oh! if her dear Timothy was but alive to ſee this day—to ſee the buſineſs he, poor dear creature, took ſuch pains to eſtabliſh, thrown away on ſtrumpets! But it did not ſignify—ſee what the Ducheſs would ſay. The poor Frenchman, unable to ſtop the torrent of her reproaches, and conſcious of her having op-
poſed

posed his employing our heroine, was filled with confusion and dismay. The disobliging of the young Duchess, whose beauty was not more the object of general admiration, than her sweetness and goodness was that of respect and esteem, and whose favour was as much the source of profit to the tradesman she patronized, as her displeasure was the reverse; besides for ever offending Lady Harriot, who chose to have the whole credit of the work. The superior penetration of his wife, now so evident in this unlucky event, admitted not of dispute; he therefore had neither power nor inclination to oppose her measures;—she insisted on taking out a warrant against the hussy, to which he readily consented: it was, however, too late in the evening to take a step of that nature, and the innocent Anna was suffered to pass that night unknowing of the dreadful fate which awaited her.

C H A P. LXIX.

The Trio of Magistrates.

THE loss of the embroidery afflicted our heroine most sensibly, as she doubted not but the means of her subsistence would be taken from her; but that was an object of far less concern to her now than it would have been a few days ago. Herbert was gone! How gladly would she now resign a life, which had been a constant scene of sorrow and disappointment, to be united to him for ever! In reflections on the uncommon cruelty of her fate—in despair of one day's peace—joyless in the present, and hopeless in the future, her heart sickened, and the extreme dejection of her spirits, which could not evaporate in tears, brought on a slow fever, which preyed on her all night, but intermitted

mitted towards morning, when she fell into a doze, from which she was awakened by the cries of Hannah at her chamber-door. —Almost fainting with weakness and grief, she made an effort to dress herself, and opened the door; when, to her unspeakable terror, two men entered, who told her they had got a warrant against her. Ignorant of their meaning, as well as intent, she begged to know what they meant; when in burst the inexorable Mrs. Desmoulins, bidding her instantly go with them; the meaning was, to punish such demure fluts as her; and, since she could not produce her work, she should be employed in Bridewell, where thieving could answer no end.

Hannah's outcries brought the neighbours in; when the volubility of the tradeswoman, opposed to the death-like silence of poor Anna, immediately settled the matter:—"No wonder the gentlewoman was
" in such a passion; it was a sad thing for
" people to lose their bread by such crea-
" tures:—it was plain enough she was
" guilty; that might be seen in her looks."

—One of the constables, however, in compassion to her youth and sex, begged Mrs. Desmoulins would withdraw, and let him try to bring her to confession. At this Anna started:—"I know not what you mean, or why I am thus surrounded; if it be on account of the work I have lost, be pacified, madam; I have one friend, who can and will satisfy you. I am," continued she, "very ill able to support myself under such treatment; but be assured you will be paid your demand: I beg I may be left alone."

"Yes, yes, mistress, you will have time enough to be alone," retorted the woman; "you must now be satisfied at going into company.—Come, Sir, do your office."

—The men seized her.—Slipping from their hands on her knees, her face bathed in tears, and every token of despair in her countenance, she begged to know what was to be done with her, and where she was to go; but no answer was vouchsafed to her heart-breaking intreaties: she was carried down and put into a coach, to be taken before

before the sitting magistrates. Hannah, locking up her doors, followed weeping, and wringing her hands, accompanied by the neighbours, from different motives, to the place where the rotation was held; they were there as soon as the coach; and Anna was lifted out, being utterly unable to stand, and carried before the bench, which consisted of three magistrates.

One was a short thick man, with very spiteful blue eyes; so gouty, as to be scarcely able to walk from the door to his chair: he had, from a very mean original, wormed himself into credit, and, after carrying on a great shew of trade for a very few years, commenced bankrupt, paid the enormous composition of two and sixpence in the pound; and having obtained his certificate, by his indefatigable services, at a general election, to the successful candidate, he was put into the commission of the peace; in which, with some private resources, he contrived to pick up the means of a genteel living: He was an inflexible advocate for justice, a constant friend to the fortunate,

and an inveterate enemy to all rogues *who were poor*. His name was Atwood.

Next him sat a tall, lusty, fair man, pompous in his manner, florid in his speech, and a prodigious admirer of his own sense and dignity. When I say he was a contractor, I need not add he was rich. He was at this period famous for his opposition to that government under which he had made a fortune, and a public vilifier of the prince who had honoured him with a title: he was fond of making speeches; affected so tender a heart, that he has been known to shed tears at a sessions, with his spread hands on his heart, in behalf of a petition from a commissioner of the turnpikes and high roads, while his callous heart retreated from the woes of his own blood, and he turned a deaf ear to the pleas of the distressed of all denominations; a vociferous assertor of public justice, and a private violator of every humane tie: so humble, that he would tell you how destitute of friends, money, or recommendation, he first entered on the theatre of life; and so proud, that
no

no society was any longer tolerable to him, than it was filled with a wonder at his riches and grandeur, and bowed the knee of adulation to his prodigious abilities. This magistrate was called Sir Richard Peacock. On his right hand sat a fat dark man, with a kind of a black and blue complexion; who, though here in all the pomp of magistracy, scowled his grey gristy brows round the hall with an assumed fullness and pride; at home, in his own shop, would weigh an halfpenny-worth of plumbs to a beggar's nephew, dust the gold sugar-loaf over his door, sweep the front of his house, or any other odd matter that required doing.

He was rich enough to satisfy a miser, and saving enough to please one: his canvas apron answered two purposes; it preserved his black stuff breeches, and it saved a pocket handkerchief; that, and a nightcap *once* white, were the ensigns by which this magistrate was known in the place where he lived; but under those very unfavourable appearances, he carried a tender, and even

a generous heart, at times when he condescended to put off the importance of his character : and when he dispensed with the dear idea of money-getting, the milk of human kindness warmed his heart ; and that purse he had taken such pains to fill, was liberally opened to the calls of friendship and humanity : and this, to do him justice, was not seldom.

CHAPTER LXX.

The Friend in Need.

WHEN Anna was brought through a mob of runners, constables, disputants, and pickpockets, before those august personages, sinking with apprehensions, and overcome with fear, she ventured to raise her eyes to the awful tribunal before whom she was to be examined.

From the prejudices of first appearances, the grey locks of Atwood gave her hopes, which

which the mild-looking Sir Richard confirmed ; but from the bent brow of Mr. Sago her soul shrunk.

Mrs. Desmoulins, though upwards of fifty, dressed in pink and the height of the mode, was honoured with a seat within the bar, while the poor culprit, in whose countenance modesty and delicacy were strongly delineated, and whose pallid cheeks shewed her weakness and ill health, supported herself by leaning on the bar, Hannah not being able to squeeze up to her, surrounded by men whose appearances struck her with terror.

Mr. Desmoulins likewise soon made his appearance ; when respect to their dress induced the worthy magistrates to give them an instant hearing.

Mr. Desmoulins, in a most polite style, told them, he was in despair at the trouble he was obliged to give them ; that the person who had the honour of appearing at their bar, was one in whom he had placed great confidence ; that he had the mortification to find himself deceived in her ; and

it was with great regret and repugnance he did himself the honour of charging her with a defraud.

“ Who are you, Sir ; what is your name ; and where do you reside ? ” demanded Justice Atwood.

With an important bow he was going to answer, when Mrs. Desmoulins interrupted him :

“ Lord, Louis, what signifies your giving such a roundabout tale to their honours ! Please you, my Lord, I keep the Star and Garter embroidery warehouse in Pall-Mall ; we work for all the people of fashion ; and this girl, being no better than she should be, came to us for employment.”

“ What,” interrupted Atwood, “ she is a—a——— you understand me.”

“ Yes, indeed, Sir, she is no better than a kept woman ; and we, out of compassion, employed her ; for, God be praised, we want not for hands or business ; or, indeed, what we might live on without it.”

“ Bring

“Bring a chair for this here lady, and
“that there gentleman,” said the civil
justice. “Now, Madam, we can hear,
“when you can speak with more ease to
“yourself.”

“Well, please your Worship, a lady of
“the first quality (we work for few others)
“sent us a job, and my foolish husband
“would make me give it her, together with
“the coat finished by way of pattern; and
“now, when it should be done, she has
“made away with it.”

“Well, young woman,” said Sir Rich-
ard, “you hear the enormity of the crime
“of which you are charged—you have, it
“seems, been guilty of a two-fold offence;
“you have betrayed the confidence
“placed in you by these worthy people,
“and you have defrauded them of their
“property. I profess my heart bleeds,
“it drops, I say, blood, to see such wicked-
“ness in so young a creature. What
“is your name?”—[A pause]—“Why do
“you not speak? What is your name?”

“Why

“Why don’t you answer his Worship?” said the constable who had brought her there.

It was impossible—the agony of her soul was too strong for utterance—speech was denied her—and an obstinate silence being imputed to her in contempt of justice, oaths were prepared to be administered to the prosecutors, and Anna ordered to be committed; when Mr. Sago approaching her, and looking under his bent brow, filled her with fresh terror. Her eyes were involuntarily averted, and her head turned from him.

Viewing her earnestly, “Can nobody be found?” said he, in a softened voice; “have you nobody, child, who will be bail for you? for, gentlemen,” turning to his brethren, “according to the story of the prosecutor, and we have not heard the poor girl, this at the worst can be but a breach of trust: have you nothing to say for yourself, child?” said he, turning tenderly to her.

Speech,

Speech, with a violent gush of sorrow, was now lent her:—with her spread hands on her face, while the tears dropped through her fingers, “ Oh, Sir !” exclaimed she, “ may the blessings of the broken-hearted attend you !—indeed I am wronged—I would have paid the value of the work, which was stolen from my apartment.”

“ Have you any one to speak to your character ?”

“ Character !” repeated Mrs. Desmoulins ; “ she robbed the lady where she lived last, and has since been upon the town—Character indeed !”

“ Is this true, child ?” said Sago.

“ Good God, Sir, no ! for heaven’s sake ; what lady do you allude you ? or, what do you mean by the town ?”

“ I mean Lady Edwin, who knows you to be a thief.”

“ Take care, Madam,” said Anna—some remains of her pride, uniting with conscious innocence—“ wretched and friendless as I now appear, there are in the world (bursting into a fresh flood of tears)

“tears) those that will support my innocence, and vindicate my character.—Lady Edwin herself would be one of the first to join in the punishment of such a cruel calumny.”

“Come, come, woman,” sternly said Sir Richard, “you are charged on the oath of Mr. and Mrs. Desmoulins, both people of undoubted credit, with a defraud; and if you have not good and sufficient bail, to prison you must go: *my time*, and that of my brethren on the bench, is too precious to waste with your equivocations. I am, myself, obliged (looking round him with dignity) to attend the national affairs of the realm. What say you, Mr. a—a—*you, Sir*, the keeper of the prison?”

Anna looked up; her pride again forsook her, in the horror of associating with the wretches she beheld; of being dragged away among the abandoned of both sexes: she was sensible only to terror; and, throwing herself on her knees, she addressed Mrs. Desmoulins:

“Have

“ Have pity on my youth, Madam ;
“ consider I am of your own sex : for the
“ honour of humanity, spare me.”

“ So I will, if you confess ; so I will,
“ if you tell me where the work may be
“ recovered ; but not else.”

The husband, a little mollified, would now have interfered ; but that served only as oil on a flame : his wife’s passion increased, and Anna was on the point of being dragged away, though Mr. Sago wished still to be favourable ; but Mrs. Desmoulins unfortunately asking him “ If he would
“ make good her loss ?” an end was put to the affair ; when good fortune, in the shape of Mr. Bently, pushed in. His person was, as well as his great fortune, known to the worshipful Bench : the bar was lifted up ; but instead of availing himself of that honour, he seized hold of Anna, and lugging her in, the tears rolling down his venerable face :

“ Ten, ten thousand pounds bail for her ;
“ will that do, Sir Richard ? will that do,
“ Mr. Atwood ?” and shaking with his vacant

cant hand the thumb of the grocer, " will
" that do ?"

The general surprise of these distributors of justice, and the people who were present, soon gave way to the respect due to a young person, under the avowed protection of so rich a man.

" Did I not bid you, my amiable girl, seek a friend at the Abbey?" said Mr. Bently, as soon as his emotions would let him; " why did you not come to me?"

The agony and weakness of our heroine, when her guardian angel entered, was converted to astonishment; how, in the moment when all hope was lost, when on the very verge of despair, could she believe she was really in the hands of a friend, willing and able to preserve her from wrong, to protect her from insult! The sudden transition from sorrow to joy was too much for her reduced spirits. Way was now made for Anna, every body pitied her distress. Mr. Atwood offered his own chair, it being an armed one, and Sir Richard had a bottle

bottle of *eau-de-luce* at her service ; he had even a tear ready to squeeze out at sight of so lovely a creature's indisposition. Sago lamented secretly the want of his canvas apron ; and Mrs. Desmoulins, to the astonishment of her husband, was silent.

As Anna revived, her gratitude, too strong for words, vented itself in a plentiful shower of tears ;—they were not the only ones shed on the occasion. Sir Richard, as I have said before, had a very convenient knack at weeping where he was sure no advantage could be taken of the *appearance* of humanity ; so that, on the present occasion, he even sobbed.

Really—but I must here beg one word with my reader on the subject of a weakness many people would blush at. I will acknowledge a watery head, in some cases, to be the sign of a weak heart ;—it was, in Sir Richard, more ;—it was the mark of a wicked, hypocritical one : but hallowed, forever hallowed, be the spontaneous and involuntary drops, excited by humanity, and forced by compassion, which are often seen

to

to flow from the soul of bravery itself, and grace the face of the most undaunted and courageous: yes, the same eyes from whence, in the service of their country, or in the cause of honour, courageous flashes of sacred fire have stricken confusion into the hearts of their enemies: at thy shrine, O heaven-born sympathy, how have they been suffused!

Bently wept like a child.

“ When you wanted a friend, Miss Mansel, why did you not come to me?” said he. Alas! poor girl, once acquainted
“ with the villany of a Sutton, who shall
“ condemn thee for distrusting all mankind? I have watched, followed, and
“ tried thee: my soul, like thy own, rent
“ with sorrow, and robbed of all its hopes,
“ will receive a guest, which had long forsook its habitation. In raising thy modest merit I will be joyful—and in making that beauty, innocence, and honour, which was denied pity, enviable,
“ I will feel happiness. For you, good woman, go home—I have reconciled the
“ loss

“ loss of her gown to the Duchefs, and if
“ you find you are no longer honoured with
“ the sanction and custom of that family,
“ attribute it to their native benevolence,
“ which will not suffer them to bestow their
“ favours on savages. Go !”

How beautiful is goodness ! how awful
the emanation of an upright mind ! the
words that were uttered by this honest man
struck all present with respect : *he was no*
magistrate, but those *who were* in the com-
mission, shrunk into nothing with a sense of
their own littleness, and did not interrupt
his decision.

Mrs. Desmoulins, with a front equally
devoid of gentleness or modesty, felt abash-
ed, and retired without answering the re-
spectable monitor ; and her husband, who
found the natural complacency he had for
his own dear sweet self, increased by the con-
sciousness of the mercy he had wished to
shew, marched after her, backward, bow-
ing all the way, with a mixture of triumph
and respect in his countenance.

Sir

Sir Richard had now begun an harangue :
“ It gives me,” said he, “ the great-est plea-
“ sure—It gives me the fa-tis-fac-ti-on—
“ nay, it gives me the great-est — a a a—
“ that is to say, I am glad, ve-ry glad, an
“ af-fair so black (knitting his brow) in the
“ be-gin-ning should turn out so white
“ (smiling) in the end ; and that the hand-
“ some lady in the chair—”

“ Sir,” interrupted Bently, “ I beg your
“ pardon ; I must thank you another time
“ for what you are pleased to say in favour
“ of that lady ; but, at present, she is too
“ much agitated to attend to it — we will
“ therefore beg to be excused.” He was
then going to lead her out, when a large
concourse of people were seen advancing to
the office, and three gentlemen, whose in-
dependent circumstances and good sense
kept them, though in the same commission,
from often appearing at the Rotation in
company with the trading justices, entered,
followed by as great a number of people as
could squeeze in. It was now impossible
for

for Anna, in her present weak state, to pass.

The civil Mr. Atwood therefore intreated her to retire into a little inner room behind where they sat, which offer she gladly accepted. Bently was following—when, among the new comers, he beheld Dalton. He did not mention this circumstance to Anna; but, as soon as he was satisfied in respect to her accommodation, left her, and returned to the justice-room.

CHAP. LXXI.

Proves our Heroine had a Father.

A GENTLE-looking elderly man, very much sun-burnt, by whose side stood a younger man of the same description, told a plain and moving tale. He said, his name was Mordant; he was a native of South Wales; that he had, when young, an only sister, the greatest beauty of the time, who
cap-

captivated, at the age of eighteen, the son and heir of a noble family in their neighbourhood ; but though a great and uncumbered estate, with vast personal riches, descending from the several branches of their house, were all vested in the father of this young man, no intreaties whatever could induce him to listen to the petition of his son in behalf of his love, although pride, far more than his desire of wealth, opposed his happiness. As their house boasted of a long line of ancestors, not one of whom *had* married out of the best blood in the principality, and *his* father was the son of a tradesman who dealt in butter and oats, the produce of that country ; and, finding the young gentleman was bent on marrying the object of his affection, the father had him seized, and, with unrelenting rigour, confined him in a remote part of his large mansion four years, having made a vow he *should* never see the sun till the young woman was dead or married, or till he gave his honour to think of her no more ; that his sister, being in a deplorable state of health,

health, their father dead, and themselves invited to an uncle in Jamaica, he had contrived, at her request, to scale the outside of the castle, and delivered the young man from his confinement, who set out immediately with them. He married his sister at the sea-port from whence they sailed, vowing never to return to his family till they received his beloved wife with him, and soon reached the place of their destination. The happiness of the new-married pair increasing with their family, the husband declared his intention of renouncing his country, and all of his blood who would not acknowledge his wife. A short time after they arrived, the uncle died, leaving them joint heirs to his trade and fortune; they entered into partnership, and lived in equal harmony and happiness, till a fatal epidemic fever carried off both their wives, and all his partner's children but one, the youngest, a female; that a woman, who had nursed his sister, and who, having attended her abroad, had been much

beloved by her, recovered of the fever which she caught from her mistress, but fell into a decline, which was pronounced to be incurable by any thing but her native air; and on this, it being near the time proper to send his little daughter, as is there customary, to England for education, and unwilling the poor invalid should go by herself, he had taken that opportunity to bring over his child: and as (if the old woman recovered) he would wish her to continue in England, merely that she might be near her, to leave her comfortably settled; for which purpose, as he meant to return by the first ship, and chose to avoid any possible rencontre with his family, who he more than ever disliked since the death of his wife, instead of taking it from their correspondents here, he brought money with him for the purpose of sinking it into an annuity for the life of the old servant; that they arrived safe in the Downs, when the woman, being extremely ill, and desirous of reaching London

don for advice immediately, they had left the ship there in order to proceed to town, leaving the principal part of their baggage on board; since which he had never been able to trace, by any means whatever, what had become of either his brother-in-law, his niece, or the nurse, the ship having returned without their things being ever landed, or the Captain's seeing or hearing any thing of them; that he continued to trade in their joint names till he had accumulated property beyond his expectation; and his uneasiness increasing instead of decreasing, he had brought his son over himself six years ago to finish his education, solely for the purpose of making inquiries after his lost friend; that he continued in England twelve months, and at length returned, having vainly inquired not only of his family, the old Lord being dead, but at every probable place, without being able to obtain the least intelligence concerning him; that he had concluded they were murdered for the sake of the money

his partner carried with him; and this shocking surmise was confirmed about four months ago, in a manner the most providential and extraordinary.

A bricklayer, who had long worked on his estate, having emigrated to the Spanish settlements with a mulatto slave, his wife petitioned him for means to return to her own country; that he had paid her passage home, and gave the house he resided in to an old servant: in clearing away the litters, four bags, marked by that very servant 100 Gs. which his brother had taken with him, were found and brought to him; that, shocked and surprised beyond measure, he directly went after the man, but found the schooner he had sailed in was lost; that, not doubting his wife must be acquainted with the catastrophe, of which he had such strong apprehensions, he then came to England in pursuit of her, whom he easily traced; and on questioning her about the bags, she readily acknowledged them; but said her husband had received

ceived the money from a clergyman, whom, after much difficulty, he likewise traced, though he had great reason to suppose it an evasion, and had sent a card to him to beg his attendance, and he was now present: he intreated they would please to examine the woman strictly, that if the blood of the worthiest of men, and his innocent child, had been spilt, vengeance might be taken.

Such a story, told with every appearance of truth and feeling, could not but have a partisan in the heart of every auditor; and the woman being put to the same bar, where an hour before our heroine stood an instance of persecuted innocence, one of the gentlemen magistrates exhorted her to be careful not to vary from the truth in her examination, as circumstances of a heinous nature, which had already come out, would be aggravated and confirmed by her prevarications. She was then shewn the bags, and repeated her story, adding, the person's name from whom her husband received

them, was Dalton : he was on this desired to walk forward.

From the instant the avaricious wretch saw the bags, and heard what was going forward, he gave himself up for lost ; but when he found the man who had received them of him was dead, and only the hearsay-evidence of his wife, he wisely concluded, his No was as good as her Yes ; he therefore positively denied the whole matter : the woman persisted in her story ; he in denying it :—when another, to him unwelcome stranger, made her way through the crowd : this was Mrs. Clark, who arrived at her house about two hours after Anna was carried away, as we have related : from thence, hearing from the neighbourhood what had happened, she flew to the office ; and, pushing through the mob, weeping and lamenting, the first person who struck her eyes was Dalton, and she concluded he was there on behalf of Anna.

“ Oh ! thank God,” said she, “ you are
“ here—Where is the dear child ? It will kill
“ her

“her.—She was all but dead when I left
“her.—Nothing else should have brought
“me home so soon.

“*Who,*” answered Dalton, not a little
confounded at the appearance of the only
witness that could have been brought
in the world to confront him; “do you
“rave?”

“Rave!” said she, “you are enough to
“make one rave; why is not Miss Mansel
“here?”

Bently, who now understood her to be
the friend of his charge, beckoned her to
him, and the examination went on.—The
woman begged, before her commitment
was signed, to be once more heard.

She then asked the Doctor, if, seventeen
years ago, he had not laid out some money
on a chapel in Stepney Fields?

“That he did, poor man,” said Mrs.
Clark; “every body knows that, and
“how that villain, White, ran away with
“it: I am sure I pitied him from my
“heart.”

A general confusion now for a moment ensued—the merchant and justices were unanimous in calling on Mrs. Clark for farther information; but no farther could she give: yet it was circumstantial evidence; and Dalton was told he must be included in the commitment.

Overpowered by guilt and shame, the narrow-souled being stood for some moments in suspense, when his cunning, which generally was his very good friend, taught him a new lesson. He requested the court might be cleared, and then, humbly prostrating himself at the feet of the merchant, he confessed the whole matter as we have before related it; alleged that, neither the child nor money being claimed, he was tempted to make use of the one, and keep the other; and having been so unfortunate as to be cheated by the rogue, White, he had never acknowledged having had money it was not in his power to repay.

“But where is my child—where is she—
“does she exist?—Let us go to her,” said
the

the merchant, now more confounded than before.

Dalton was beginning an excuse, when Bently stepping forward, and addressing himself to the stranger, said, he would save Dalton the trouble of farther relation, by informing him, that she had for good causes left his house; and after defrauding her of fourteen hundred pounds, he had stopped her clothes, on the demand of one hundred and fifty pounds more for a few years board, which sum had been actually received from a young libertine by whom she was said to be kept.

"Oh! my poor girl," cried the merchant, shedding tears—"but she will see her error—she will be one of the first fortunes in the kingdom—he may marry her."

"No, no, that cannot be," said Mr. Bently.

"Why will you say so, Sir?" returned he.

M 5

"For

“ For a very good reason—he is married already.”

“ Wretch !” answered the merchant, turning to Dalton, “ what hast thou to answer for ?

“ Oh, nothing to speak of,” returned Bently ; “ for the truth is, she never was kept by any libertine whatever—that was indeed nothing to Dalton, he fingered the money. But come, Sir, if I restore you your niece, will you engage never to rob me of my child ?” So saying, he retired to the room where Anna was, followed by the two gentlemen, father and son, and Mrs. Clark, who, immediately embracing her, lamented being out of the way when such an indignity had been offered her.

But more interesting scenes now engaged the attention of our heroine. The merchant burst into tears the instant he saw her—it was his very sister—there needed no witness but her countenance—he should have known her from thousands.

The

The young man, throwing himself at her feet in a transport, exclaimed, " it was
" then more than mere passion, it was the
" blessed emanation of blood, that so irre-
" sistibly drew every faculty of my soul to
" my lovely cousin—This, Sir, is the ami-
" able creature I represented to you as my
" first and only love!—My charming cou-
" sin, will you not speak to your nearest
" relation, your Mordant?"

Surprise at those salutations was tempered with a pleasing expectation of their meaning: Anna's heart throbbed with joy at the idea of finding at last somebody who would own her. To hear herself addressed as dear cousin, and as dearer niece, by two such respectable characters; to be caressed as the likeness of an amiable mother; to feel herself intitled to ties hitherto unknown to her, but which her heart had often panted after; was such an excess of pleasure, that all the past misfortunes, even the loss of Herbert, were forgotten.

Her uncle folded her to his bosom, while his son, loath for a moment to give up his claim of tenderness, bathed her hands with drops of congenial love and warm affection. Mrs. Clark was not forgot in the general joy; and Bently affected a discontent at being thus robbed of her whom he had adopted, under which were visible benevolent beams of the most heart-felt satisfaction.

Mr. Mordant proposed to his niece to return to Mrs. Clark's till he could procure lodgings fit to receive her.—This was opposed by Bently, who said Miss Mansel was engaged to meet some ladies at a friend's of his.—Anna looked surprised;—she knew not yet even the means by which he had found her; and much less could she guess at the company he talked of; but he was too positive to be ruled, and too happy to be reasonable; and therefore insisted on the whole group crowding into his coach. One event more, however, was to crown the morning's adventure: just as they were going

going out, young Edwin entered; he came in the utmost haste to relieve Anna from the misfortune in which his servant's officious zeal for his wishes had involved her — Really shocked at the consequence of an act he had applauded, and which, in hopes to have his offers of service accepted, had carried him to her lodgings, he set out with equal haste to prevent her being insulted with a charge of so ignominious a nature.

As soon as Bently saw him, with a very sarcastical smile he congratulated him on chusing to forfeit his recognizance, rather than appear at the horse-whipping affair; and begged to have the honour of repaying him the hundred and fifty pounds he had so generously advanced for Miss Mansel's clothes to Dalton.

"Why, surely," said the elder Mordant, "Mr. Edwin cannot be the person who did it?"

"There he is," said Bently; "if his infamous plans had succeeded, which, thank God, they did not, he is too much
"of

“ of a Welshman to deny a fact he would cut your throat for charging him with.”

“ Really, Sir,” answered Edwin, with a scornful frown, “ your language is unintelligible to me.”

“ May be so—may be so,” answered Bently; “ it is plain English though: but I have no time to throw away.—Come, Madam,” taking Anna’s hand from her uncle, “ lead the way to your *own* carriage.”

Edwin, all astonished, called on young Mordant, who, with a very ill grace, suffered the happy party to proceed without him, while he went into a tavern to recount particulars, which in every part cut his auditor to the soul, and then followed his father, by the directions Bently gave him, to Mrs. Wellers’ in Charter-house-square.

C H A P. LXXII.

An Old Man's Perseverance.

IT is now proper to inform the reader of the happy accident which brought about this event with respect to Bently. I have before said, he made a strict, and, the reader will conclude, a fruitless search after Anna. He returned to the Abbey in the utmost dejection of spirit at his disappointment, when Mrs. Wellers sent for him to give him what farther particulars she had heard of our heroine. What appeared to her an inexplicable mystery, was immediately developed by him, who knew well the founder of her disgrace at Melmoth-Lodge, her accuser at Lady Edwin's, and her persecutor at Layton, was one and the same person. So rooted, indeed, were his contempt and hatred for that Nobleman, that
no

no crime appeared to him too black to be perpetrated by him; and Anna's refusal to become his wife, while it added to her credit in the opinion of Mrs. Wellers, endeared her to his soul.—He heard, with indignation, the farther reports from the Daltons, of Edwin's paying their demand, and possessing himself of her clothes;—but rightly concluding, though he had before watched that young man in all his manœuvres, without success, that he must now have acquired some knowledge of her, he set off for London; and having again set his spy to work, learnt, (although, while Wilkinson was in town, the matter did not see her he was in search of) that his favourite man took very frequent journeys into the city; consequently it one day entered his head to watch him; and having lodged him at Clark's, he went to the opposite side, to a snuff shop, in order to find out what kind of people kept the house: the answer he received being only, that it was an old woman with her daughter, and that

that the man who had just entered was sweetheart to the latter, he was on the point of going off, satisfied this was not the road to his wished discovery;—when, happening to look up, he saw Anna remove a blind from the window, which, as the day was shutting in, obstructed the light, and sit down at her frame to work.—He retreated back, most flagnated.—Too inconsistent, now, even to him, were the reports to her disadvantage: indeed, if Edwin kept her, it was not probable his large fortune and small stock of prudence would have fixed on such a situation for his mistress;—but, then, he was lately married, and secrecy on that account might be necessary:—in a word, he had almost given her up, when the woman of the shop, addressing her husband, remarked how industrious that poor sick young woman was. “She is now,” added she, “poring between the lights,—” “no wonder she looks so ill;—poor thing,” “I am sure she does not eat the bread of” “idleness.”

This

This caught his attention—and seeing a bill for a two pair of stairs front room to be lett to a single man, he immediately took it, and mounting his new lodging, had then watched our heroine, till he was convinced her own labour supported her, as he overlooked her whenever he pleased.

Satisfied with his observations, and knowing she was an orphan, him^{self} being childless, and without a relation in the world, he immediately formed the resolution of adopting her, and went to Layton to communicate his discoveries and intentions to Mrs. Wellers.

On the day after Mr. Bates gave his master such a proof of his dexterity, it was agreed Mr. Bently should go to Anna in the morning, make known his intention, and bring her to young Mr. Wellers', where Mrs. Wellers was to meet them to dinner, and take our heroine home with her till Mr. Bently should regulate his house (now a mere bachelor's) fit to receive a mistress, and procure a companion for her of such reputa-

reputation as might prevent the busy and censorious world from glancing a scandal.

The mutual pleasure the meeting at Mr. Wellers' gave our heroine, and a lady she both loved and esteemed; is not to be told. When the transactions of the morning, and the happy conclusions with Mr. Mordant's story, which Anna had not before heard, were repeated, even Mr. Wellers, with all his apathy, was affected;—Anna threw herself into her uncle's arms, in expressive, though speechless acknowledgments, for his kind and unwearied solicitude to discover her, which had the greater merit, as he declared half his fortune was, in justice, hers. It now came to Anna's turn to be the relator; every heart of the present auditors, Mr. Wellers' only excepted, who, for the generality, had no heart at all, was actuated by the same spring, universal benevolence and kindness to all their fellow creatures. When, therefore, the distress, illness, and sufferings
of

of this innocent young woman came to be exhibited by the voice of truth, could they be less than affected? No eye was dry, no heart but gave the tribute due to such unmerited sorrow; nor was there any one but felt, with an excess of pleasure, the happy change in her affairs. Mrs. Wellers insisted, and Mr. Mordant consented, Anna should go home with her till she could be settled.—Bently hallooed, sung, whistled, and wept all the way home; his exertion of spirit, indeed, was not to be wondered at, since, for the first time he had tasted any thing but water for twenty years, he had lately drank a pint bumper of claret. At parting, Mr. Mordant put into his niece's hand a pocket-book, in which were two thousand pounds in bank-notes. — “Re-ward, my love,” said he, “your friends, and humble your enemies, by shewing them lessons of true generosity. All narrow resentments are now beneath you; you are yet ignorant of the rank you are entitled to; munificence and greatness
“ of

“ of soul are the hereditary rights of
“ your blood; and Providence has amply
“ supplied you with the means of being
“ respectable as well as rich.” — With
those kind admonitions he left her, posi-
tively refusing his consent to his son’s
attending her to Layton, as he earnestly
requested.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.



